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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1863.

ABLE TO SAVE.



“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” (Heb. vii. 25.)

Reader, there is one subject in religion about which we never can know too much. That subject is Jesus Christ the Lord. This is the mighty subject which this text unfolds—Jesus Christ and his intercession.

I have heard of a book entitled “The Story without an End.” I know no story deserving that title so well as the everlasting gospel. This is indeed and in truth the story without an end. There is an infinite “fulness” in Christ. There are in him “unsearchable riches.” There is in him a “love which passeth knowledge.” He is an “unspeakable gift” (Col. i. 19 ; Ephes. iii. 18, 19 ; 1 Cor. x. 15).—There is no end to all the riches that are treasured up in Him, in his person, in his work, in his offices, in his words, in his deeds, in

his life, in his death, in his resurrection.

We need much comfort and consolation in a world like this. It is no easy matter for a man to carry the cross and reach heaven. There are many enemies to be encountered and overcome. We have often to stand alone. We have at the best times few with us and many against us. We need cordials and strong consolation to sustain and cheer us, and to preserve us from fainting on the way as we travel from Egypt into Canaan. The apostle appears deeply conscious of all this in the words he uses. He says, “He is able to save to the uttermost”—to save perfectly, to save completely, to save eternally—all that come unto God by him, because he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

1. Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding the old sins*, and all the sins, however great, of

any believer. These sins shall never rise up to condemn the child of God. For what says the Scripture?—"Christ hath not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). Christ, to use a legal phrase, is ever making an appearance in the court of heaven on behalf of them that believe in him. There is not a year, nor a month, nor a day, nor an hour, nor a minute, but there is One living in the presence of God to make an appearance there on behalf of all the saints. His blood and his sacrifice are ever in God's sight. His work, his death, his intercession, are always sounding in God the Father's ears.

I remember reading a story in ancient history which may help to illustrate the truth on which I am now dwelling. It is the story of one who was put upon trial for a capital charge at Athens, shortly after the great battle of Marathon. In that famous battle the Athenians had preserved, by their valour, liberty for their little state, against the mighty hosts of the Persians; and among those who had distinguished themselves greatly the brother of the prisoner was one, and had been sorely wounded in the fight. The man was put upon his trial. The evidence against him was strong and unanswerable. There seemed no chance of the prisoner escaping condemnation. Suddenly there came forward one who asked to be heard on his behalf. And who was this? It was his own brother. When he was asked what evidence he had to give, or what reason he had to shew why the prisoner at the bar ought not to be found guilty, he simply lifted up his mutilated arms—nothing but stumps—the hands completely cut off, the wounded stumps alone remaining. He was recognised as a man who, at the battle of Marathon, had done prodigies of valour, and in the service of the state had lost his hands. By these wounds he had helped to win the victory which

was then ringing in Athenian ears. Those wounds were the only plea he advanced why his brother ought to be let go free, and sentence ought not to pass upon him. And the story states that for the sake of those wounds, for the sake of all his brother had suffered, the prisoner was acquitted. Reader, in like manner the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ are ever before God the Father. The nail-prints in his hands and feet—the marks of the spear in his side—the thorn-marks upon his forehead—the marks of all that he suffered as a Lamb slain, are ever before God the Father in heaven. While Christ is in heaven the believer's sins will never rise in judgment against him. Think not with fear upon those old sins of yours, my believing brother or sister. Christ lives, and those old sins will not condemn you. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

2. Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding all the temptations of the devil*. Remember that famous passage in the gospel of Luke, where our Lord, speaking of Peter, says, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 32). Prayer like that is still carried on. Those words were spoken as an emblem of what the Lord is ever doing on behalf of his believing people. Satan, the prince of this world, is ever going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But Christ lives, and blessed be God, while Christ lives Satan shall not be able to overcome the soul that believes on him. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

3. Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding the sting of death*, and all that death brings with it. When David remembered that, he said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will

fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me' (Ps. xxiii. 4). You and I may die, but Christ still lives. The hour may come when friends can do us no more good, when faithful servants can no longer minister to our wants, when all that love, and kindness, and affection can do to alleviate pain and make the last journey pleasant, can no longer render any service to us. But then the thought that Christ lives—Christ interceding, Christ caring for us, Christ at the right hand of God for us—ought to cheer us. The sight of death will be taken away from the man that leans upon a dying and also a living Saviour. Christ never dies. Through faith in that living Saviour we shall have a complete victory. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

Lastly, Christ is able to save to the uttermost *throughout eternity*. "I am he," he says, "that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore," (Rev. i. 18). The root of the believer never dies, and the branches, therefore, shall never die. Christ being "raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him," (Rom. vi. 9). He lives, that all who trust in him may receive honour and glory to all eternity; and because he lives, his believing people shall never die. "Because I live," to use his own words, "ye shall live also," (John xiv. 19).

Reader, would you know the security for the perseverance of God's own people? Would you know why it is that Christ's sheep shall never perish, and none shall pluck them out of his hand?—It is the continual intercession of a mighty Friend at the right hand of God—a Friend that cares for the believer morning, noon, and night. The intercession of Christ is the secret of the perseverance of the Christian.

Reader, you would do well to study the words of the apostle in the 5th chapter of Romans: "Much more,

then," he says, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Mark the connection: "Being already justified by his death, we shall be saved,"—and saved by what? "By his life," by his ever living to make intercession for us. Wise and beautiful is the comparison made by that master of allegory, John Bunyan, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." He tells us how Christian was taken into the Interpreter's house, and how the Interpreter shewed him many things wonderful and instructive. In one place he took him into a room where there was a fire burning, and shewed him one ever pouring water upon that fire, and yet the water did not quench the fire. However much water he poured on, still the fire went on burning steadily. Then said the Interpreter, "Knowest thou what this means?" When Christian did not know, he took him behind the fire, and shewed him one pouring on oil out of a vessel. This oil fed the fire, and made it burn more fiercely, notwithstanding all the water that was poured upon it. Then the Interpreter told him that this was a picture of Jesus Christ's intercession. The fire was the fire of grace in the believer's heart. He that poured on the water was the enemy of souls, the devil. But he that poured on the oil, standing behind the fire, was the Lord Jesus Christ, who by continual intercession and the supply of his Spirit, secretly and unseen by man, kept alive his own work in the believer's heart, and did not allow Satan to get a victory over him.

Would you know the secret of the believer's boldness in prayer? It is the intercession of Jesus Christ, whereby the true Christian knows his prayers are made acceptable. What is the believer's prayer in itself? I

know nothing it is more like than a bank-note without the signature in the corner. What is the value of that bank-note without the signature? Nothing at all. Once get a few words, a very few letters, traced in ink upon the corner of that bank-note, and that which was a piece of waste paper a few moments before becomes worth, it may be, many hundred pounds. So it is with the intercession of Christ. He signs, endorses, and presents the believer's petitions, and through his intercession they are heard and answered.

1. I would *offer counsel* first to all who are anxious and troubled respecting their soul's salvation, and yet know not what to do. Reader, if you are such a person, I charge you and entreat you, I beseech you and invite you to come into the way of which I have been speaking in this tract. I beseech you to come to God by the old and tried way, the way of faith in Jesus Christ. Draw near to God pleading the name of Jesus. Begin this very day to cry mightily unto God in the name of Jesus on behalf of your soul. Say nothing about yourself but this, that you are a sinner, a great sinner, a guilty sinner, a condemned sinner; but because you are a sinner, you turn to God. Come to him in the name of Jesus, saying you have heard that through Jesus a sinner may come near him. Tell him that you come in the faith of his promises, in the confidence of his own Bible invitation, and in the name of Jesus, and on account of Jesus, you ask to be received, heard, pardoned, forgiven, and accepted.

2. *I would cheer* those readers who have walked in the way of God, and yet are afraid of falling. Why should you be afraid? What should make you suppose that you shall ever be allowed to fall away, while Jesus Christ lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for you? He has undertaken to care for all the flock that God the Father has committed into his hand. He will care for it. He has cared for it. He went to the cross for it. He died for it. He is ever at the right hand of God, and has not ceased to care for it. Every member of that flock—the weakest, the feeblest member of that flock—is equally dear to the Lord and Saviour, and none shall pluck the least of Christ's sheep out of God's hand.

3. Finally, *let me gladden* all believers who read this tract, by reminding them that Christ is yet to come again. He shall come in power and great glory. He shall come to gather from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, all who have loved his name and confessed him before men—all who have heard his voice and followed him. He shall gather them together into one happy company. There shall be no more weakness, and no more sorrow—no more parting, and no more separation—no more sickness, and no more death—no more disputing, and no more controversy—no more fighting with the world, the flesh, and the devil—and, best of all, no more sin. "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Rev. J. C. Kyle.
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Those who feel disposed to aid the Society in continuing and extending the gratuitous circulation of these Tracts, are requested to give their Subscriptions or Donations, however small, to the Distributors of the Tracts.

DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 South Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

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WHAT DOEST THOU FOR ME?

NARRATIVE OF A GERMAN MINISTER, BY HIS BROTHER.



My late brother was, I might almost say from his birth, unblameable and unreprieveable according to the law. As a scholar, he obtained the highest approbation and praise of his teachers, and was exhibited to his schoolfellows as a pattern for their imitation. This, though it exposed him to the secret envy and dislike of a few, procured for him the most flattering public marks of respect from the whole city. He felt conscious of supposed worth, but his ignorance of himself, and his confidence in his own righteousness, grew with his increasing years.

At the college of H.—, he devoted himself to theology, but he heard and learned nothing of the theology of Christ; nothing of the God-man, who not only is given to us as a teacher of virtue, but as a

Mediator between a holy God and sinners separated from Him, as a sin-offering and atonement; nothing of Jesus as the only way, as the only truth, the only fountain of eternal life. He imagined himself too virtuous to need a Redeemer, and too righteous before God and man to require the righteousness of another, either in this world or in that which is to come.

He left the university a decided deist, in the very worst sense: his belief in a God was hardly more than a fluctuating supposition that there might be a Deity in heaven who troubled Himself with the affairs of men on earth. He, however, said freely to those in his confidence, that he rather believed than disbelieved in the being of a God. Morality and virtue he considered as in general

independent of God and faith in Him; and he considered the morality of the heathen philosophers as more adapted to human nature, than the morality of Christ.

With these opinions, when he left the university, he went into the Baron von P.'s family, as tutor to his two sons. During the first weeks of his residence there, he carefully concealed his religious principles, but the thought was burdensome to him, that he should be obliged to instruct his pupils in the Christian doctrines taught in the Bible. In about fourteen days, however, Baron von P. entered the room as he was teaching, and in the presence of the children, spoke to him as follows: "Dear Mr S., I am far from prescribing to you any rules or methods in instructing my children, but I must frankly tell you, that I do not wish you to make them pietists, or fanatics, but to form them rational, steady men. God, virtue, immortality, is the whole of religion to me, and all the rest, to thinking men, is but fables and tales. Explain to my children, and impress these three ideas on their minds; then you have done your duty, and I am satisfied." One may easily suppose how pleasing this unexpected explanation was to the like-minded tutor. He promised that he would faithfully discharge the duty he had undertaken, to train his pupils to be thinking, virtuous men, and not to fill their heads with old and new Jewish superstitions, and their hearts with fanatical follies. He kept his word, and soon saw both his pupils laugh at every thing esteemed and revered by true Christians.

After four years he began his clerical life, and was placed as a minister in the little country town of M—. His motives were quite worldly. Twelve years he exercised the ministerial office. How? With what effect? This must speak for itself. His delivery was uncommonly popular, perspicuous, and

attractive. The subjects of his sermons were nature and virtue. He was, however, very kind to the poor, and to orphans; by this he gained and kept firm hold of the affections of his people.

In this way he continued to exercise his ministry till the last three months of his short life: he was cut off in his thirty-seventh year. One day, after baptising the child of a wealthy citizen, one of the members of his congregation, he was invited, with some other guests, to an entertainment at this person's house. Directly opposite to him, on the wall, hung an inscription, intimating that Christ had died for his people, and particularly two lines which caught his attention:

*"This I did for thee;
What doest thou for me?"*

As he read the lines they seemed to pierce him, and he was involuntarily seized with a feeling he never experienced before. Tears rushed into his eyes; he said little in the company, and took his leave as soon as he could. On the way home, these lines constantly sounded in his ears; divine grace made the impression deep and lasting. Even during the night, in his dreams, the question stood always before his mind, "What doest thou for me?"

In the morning he felt an irresistible desire to visit the old godly minister of a neighbouring village, whom he had before despised as a weak enthusiast. He went to him the same forenoon. The good old man received him kindly, and begged him to take a part of his homely dinner, which he did. With secret, silent joy, the old minister perceived a change in his guest. His visitor spoke little, but appeared exceedingly modest, gentle, and friendly; and his host felt himself constrained to offer up fervent prayer in his heart for his conversion. After taking coffee, he read to him two hymns from his hymn book; one beginning with,

"One thing is needful, Lord, but one;" and the other, "O Jesus Christ, my fairest light." At the verse, "And what shall I more desire," tears flowed from the eyes of the young preacher; but when he read, "My Saviour, thou hast delivered thyself up to suffering and death out of love to me," he was so overcome, that he sank down with his head on the table as if insensible. The venerable old minister rising from his seat, knelt down, and now offered up an earnest audible prayer for the soul of this deeply humbled brother, as he now believed him to be. When the prayer was finished, the young preacher embraced him, and wished to kiss his hand. "Alas!" said he, sobbing, "how can you call me brother? What are you? and what am I?" "You are, dear brother," answered the other, "what I am, and I am in myself, what you are; that which makes any difference is, that it hath pleased God in his infinite mercy to reveal his Son in me, and this mercy will also come to you. If I, as an experienced man, venture to give you my advice, it would be this, Draw not back your hand from the plough, consult not flesh and blood, and human reasonings—He that hath begun the good work will perfect it." My brother returned home, and spent the whole of the week in reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer for enlightening grace and a conviction of the truth; and the Lord did not despise his prayer.

The following Sabbath, he frankly confessed to his hearers, that till then, he had not been directing them in the right way to eternal life. The only way of true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, was now for the first time made known to himself, and he openly and solemnly confessed, that our own righteousness is as filthy rags, that our salvation is purely a gift of the free grace of God in Jesus

Christ, who gave himself for us an offering in our stead, that we might live righteous and holy on the earth, and after death be eternally blessed. The sermon itself, which was on the parable of the ten virgins, was extremely affecting, and made a singular, and, in some cases, a blessed impression on the hearers, who were wholly unaccustomed to such sermons. He preached eight or nine Sabbaths in the same strain; but on the Monday after the last one, he was seized with a violent cold. This illness lasted three weeks; and on the twenty-first day he departed from this world.

On the day he was taken ill, he wrote me a most heart-cheering letter. Among other things, he said, "I have for ever taken leave of all philosophy which is not drawn from the precious Bible, the fountain of truth; my only book is my Bible, to me now inestimable. O my dear brother, all is so new to me in the New Testament, it is as if I had never heard the name of it before; and all is so full of instruction and comfort, so animating to the mind, so reviving to the heart. Every word of Jesus and His apostles is to me a fountain, that gives more and sweeter water, the oftener and longer I continue to drink from it."

For the first fourteen days he did not speak much, but his look and gesture bespoke, even under the most violent paroxysms of pain, his inward peace. On the seventh day before his decease, his mouth began to speak out of the fulness of his heart, and exhibited in the clearest light the genuineness of his conversion, and the operations of divine grace in his soul. His expressions were partly deep repentance and shame, and partly praise and admiration of the inexpressible love, long-suffering and sparing mercy of his Redeemer. "My Lord, and my God!" he once cried out with rapture, "a whole eternity will not be long enough to

tell of Thy incomprehensible love to sinners. Oh! eternal Love, hast thou done so much for such an opposer and despiser of Thee, as I have been." At another time, he said, "How precious now is every word of my late godly mother, though at one time I laughed at her in my heart. Ah, certainly she had never ceased to pray for her poor blind son at the throne of grace, and the ever-merciful Saviour has heard her prayer! Oh wonder of mercy! It is well with thee, my happy brother; thou hast early sought the Lord, and He was found of thee; unworthy I come like the dying thief, and as a brand plucked from the fire."

On the third day before his death, in the evening, he lay a whole hour in devout silence, his looks sometimes expressive of grief, sometimes of joy; he then opened his eyes, and repeated the words, "That Thou didst for me!" A few minutes afterwards he dictated to me a farewell letter to his congregation, full of apostolical faith and energy, full of grateful love to Jesus his Saviour, and full of sorrow and repentance for his former enmity to Christ, and his soul-destroying preaching; and concluding with an exhortation and a prayer, full of fervour and unction.

The last day he passed in silent communion with his mighty Saviour. He only thrice repeated his now more endeared expression, "That Thou didst for me!" Towards midnight, he seized my hand, and the hand of the old minister, who was present, and pressed them to his breast,

and would have kissed them; then with a weak voice he said, "Hallelujah to the Lamb that was slain for me!" As we observed his eyes began to fail, we both sang that verse,

"Jesus, at my dissolution,
Take my longing soul to Thee."

And as we finished it, we saw that he had softly and imperceptibly fallen asleep in Jesus.

Such was the end of a son of godly, believing parents, who had been trained up when a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but as a scholar had denied the faith, and left the living fountain; of one whose life before the world was blameless, and honourable, but who at the close, by the grace of God was made to feel his misery, poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and to esteem all his wisdom and virtue but dross and dung, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. And he who had, formerly, with bitter hatred, denied and despised Christ, now embraced him with all his heart as the Saviour of sinners.

Reader, there is nothing but a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can impart true peace, and support the soul at the hour of death. Depend not, then, on yourself, or on human reasonings, for "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" Prov. xxviii. 26. Flee for refuge to the Saviour at once; abuse not His long-suffering mercy by delay; but "to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," Heb. iii. 15.

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THE TERRIBLE CHAIN.



A TRADITION exists about Rotherhithe of a singular accident, said to have occurred there at the beginning of this century, when Rotherhithe was little more than a desolate collection of fields, enlivened by a few public-houses and labourers' cottages. For the truth of the story we cannot vouch; it probably had some foundation in fact, and it well *illustrates* what is at any rate no fiction.

It is said, that as it was getting dusk one evening, when a strong ebb tide had shrunk the waters of the Thames to their lowest point, the "skipper" of a vessel, just arrived from

a foreign port, and anchored opposite Rotherhithe, put off for the shore. He was impatient to land, and the boat had barely grazed the shingle when he jumped out, and, ordering the rowers to await him there at eleven, he walked quickly up the beach.

The men, as they rowed back to the ship, observed him stumble and come to a sudden stand-still. They watched with surprise for a few moments, and then seeing he made no progress but seemed to beckon to them, they returned and found that his foot had caught in a massive iron chain which lay unobserved across

his path. The impetus with which he had been walking, had carried his foot through one of the links, and his utmost efforts failed to withdraw it, for the inflexible iron refused to let the broad part of the foot return through its narrow opening. He was fairly caught, and at first was as much inclined to laugh as to cry at the awkward accident, not doubting that a little assistance from his men would set all right. Poor fellow! They did their best, but found their strength and skill alike at fault. No twisting, or turning, or pushing, or pulling, would avail. The iron would not stretch, the foot seemed to swell rather than to contract, and the captain's first expression of amused impatience was ere long exchanged for one of pain and real vexation.

It was an old fashioned chain, with long and large links, attached to a buoy, and left uncovered by the ebb tide. What was to be done? There were few people in sight; two or three soon gathered round the unfortunate man, but they seemed at first to regard it as a good joke, and even when they saw it was no joking matter, displayed little wit or presence of mind. One suggested cutting away the boot, and the skipper, with his own knife, managed to do it, but still the foot would not pass; another proposed bleeding it, and, after some delay, a neighbouring chemist was brought, and used his lancet, but with no other effect than that of weakening the sufferer from loss of blood. Precious time had slipped away, and it was nearly dark, when some one spoke of cutting the chain. The bystanders smiled, and a cloud came over the captain's face, as he heard a whisper, "'Twould be easier to cut off the foot than to cut through the chain." To be crippled for life in his early manhood! What could they mean? He was angry, and began to curse and swear that they should work for a week, sooner

than he would lose his leg. But an expressive glance from one of his own men made him look behind him, and his lip and cheek blanched as he perceived, for the first time, the real nature of the case. *The rising tide* had already brought his boat within easy reach, and a few brief hours would cover the spot where he stood with water deep enough to drown him. He was silenced; the group eyed each other in helpless dismay for a few minutes—and then one of the men, not without a tear in his eye, exclaimed, "Better lose limb than life, sir!" and every one murmured, "Yes!" There was a struggle within before the captain could command himself sufficiently to say, "Fetch a surgeon then immediately!" And no sooner were the words uttered, than a messenger darted off, as if for life.

Reader, is there any correspondence between this case and your own? Perhaps you are startled by the question, and see not how it can apply to you. Pause, then, and consider. Is there no terrible chain binding you? or have you been, by God's grace, delivered from the thralldom and guilt of *sin*? If not, behold your picture! There you stand, caught, held fast by its iron grasp, in peril of your life!—unable to deliver yourself, or to obtain help from others. And look behind. Do you see what is overtaking you? *The advancing tide*—the approaching, awful, inevitable flood of God's *judgment against sin*. You went forth gaily in the bright morning of life; hope fired your heart, and youthful energy carried you eagerly on. You saw not Satan's snare. You dreamed not of danger; but alas! ere ever you were aware, you were taken in the one, and surrounded by the other. You found yourself overtaken in habits of sin, and though you smiled at first, and thought they would be easily broken, it has not proved so. The more you have tried to

break loose from them, the firmer you have been held in their grasp. You sought assistance from others, but it has only made matters worse.

Perhaps you now begin to perceive, not only that it causes present inconvenience and pain to be a captive bound by the chain of sin, but that it involves something much more dreadful. You may have been led to tremble at the thought, that "the wages of sin is death," and that to the sinner death is "*everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*" Oh! do you see your real case—your awful peril? The sands of time diminishing moment by moment, the dread ocean of eternity, with its cold, solemn billows, ever rolling closer and closer; life getting shorter each day; death drawing nearer, and you unfit to meet your God, and unable to avoid meeting Him; "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*" There is but a step betwixt you and death, and even now "*the Judge standeth at the door.*" What must you do?

Can yonder unfortunate say to the waves, "So far shall ye come, and no further"? No. They obey not his bidding; they heed not his despair. A voice omnipotent has appointed them their bounds, and if he move not, the waves and the billows *must* roll over him! Can he break the chain that binds him to destruction, and escape beyond their reach? No. The cold iron mocks his efforts—the terrible chain asserts in silence its passive might.

Oh, reader, is it not just your case?

But, is there then no help? Ah, yes! says some poor soul, convinced of sin and of judgment to come. Yes! I must make a great effort. I see the danger. I am resolved on a terrible sacrifice! I will pluck out this right eye, and cut off this right hand which betray me so often, that I may escape destruction. "Better

lose limb than life!" True. So thought our captain as the minutes rolled away, and the rising tide began to make the by-stander retreat, and to hide his feet in the white foam. Before the surgeon arrived, he had come to think lightly of the loss of his foot, and was only impatient for the knife. The surgeon came at last, but was appalled when he saw the case. It was impossible, said he, to amputate a foot in such a position; the limb must be removed from the hip joint, and he had no appliances with him for such an operation. He must go back to procure them, and would "bring assistance" with him soon. He left hastily, and another hour of still more anxious suspense followed. The exhausted captain stood alone in the water now; the crowd on the beach began to speculate how the matter would end. A good natured woman brought him some refreshments, and a chair, but the water rose too fast to allow of his sitting long. The sailors brought the boat alongside, and tried to cheer and encourage him; and every eye was strained to catch, in the darkness, the first glimpse of the surgeon, on whom all now depended. The delay was unaccountably long, though each moment was of utmost importance. The timid surgeon, not liking the job, had waited to seek help; and when, at last, he arrived with another, they had to avail themselves of the boat to reach their patient. After a fruitless attempt, they both declared the amputation impossible in such circumstances—the boat rolling in the rising tide, and the man so faint as to be scarce able to stand. They would not risk an action for manslaughter, they said; and, spite of his prayers and tears, they left him to his fate! They could do nothing, nor could any one else, though by this time a crowd had assembled on the shore. The captain was slow to realize that death stared him in the

face; but he did at last, and was dictating to the sailors a brief will, and a farewell letter to his wife, as the waters rose to his lips, and closed gurgling over his head! When the tide ebbed that evening, a pale corpse lay on the sands, held fast by a swollen foot to the massive iron chain!

Oh, reader, is your last end to be like his? You are caught in the snare. You have despised its results long enough. You are, perhaps, awake to your danger. What are you doing to avert it?—trusting to broken reeds, trying useless experiments as he did? *Oh! thank God, that you are better off than he!* There stands by your side One “*mighty to save*”—One who

“Can break the power of cancelled sin,
And set the captive free;
Whose blood can make the vilest clean,
Whose blood availed for me!”

And will avail for *you* too, if you will resort to it. None but Jesus can help you; but Jesus can. You may struggle to break off your sins, but, without him, you can do nothing. You may groan under the sense of your guilt. You may tremble like the devils, in view of judgment, moved by the fear that hath torment. But this cannot save you. You may try every other name under heaven, and find no help. He alone is called *Jesus*, for he only can “*save his people from their sins*”—from their mighty power, their awful guilt, their endless punishment.

A word from his lips can break the chain, and avert the danger. “*Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace; go,*

and sin no more.” He can forgive sin, because he has borne its penalty himself. He can avert judgment from you, for he allowed its billows and waves to roll over his head for you. Oh, reader! instead of saying, “peace and safety” while sudden destruction is coming upon you, instead of wasting the brief fleeting moments of this only “day of salvation” in seeking it by methods of your own, turn to him who is “*ready to save*” you. Turn to the crucified, who “*bore our sins in his own body on the tree*”—who died, “*the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.*” He has “broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder” many a time before now, bringing Satan’s prisoners out of the bondage of sin, and out of the shadow of death. Lay your case by simple faith in his hands, and he will do the same for you. Trust your soul to Jesus; rest on him as your Saviour. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved.*”

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JESUS SAID:—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”—LUKE IV. 18, 19.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”—ROMANS VI. 16.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1868.

WILLIAM C. BURNS,

MISSIONARY TO THE CHINESE.



THE REV. WILLIAM CHALMERS BURNS was born, on the 1st April 1815, at the Manse of Dun, in Forfarshire, where his father was minister. In 1821 his father removed to the parish of Kilsyth, where he died in 1859.

Mr Burns received his education partly at the parish schools of Dun and Kilsyth, and latterly at the Grammar School and University of Aberdeen. By his own wish, he afterwards came to Edinburgh to prosecute the study of law, as his future profes-

sion. Up to this time, though in his outward life blameless, Mr Burns had given no evidence of genuine conversion. It is believed that it was while pursuing his studies in Edinburgh, and while attending the ministry of Dr John Bruce (now of St Andrew's Free Church, in that city), that the great change passed over him without which a man cannot see the kingdom of God (John iii. 3). The candle was lighted too brightly to be hid. The heart being changed,

the whole purpose of existence was now changed. He dedicated his life to the gospel-ministry. During his further studies, at Aberdeen and Glasgow, he was distinguished for his diligence, and for solid acquirement. He also manifested that facility for acquiring languages, which was in his later years so helpful to him amid the strange tongues of China.

In March 1839, his studies being finished, Mr Burns was "licensed" to preach the gospel. The beloved Robert M'Cheyne was at that time in failing health. In the same spring he went out to Palestine, it being arranged that during Mr M'Cheyne's absence, Mr Burns should occupy his pulpit in St Peter's, Dundee. Here accordingly, under such circumstances, Mr Burns began his memorable ministry.

There was felt at that period, throughout Scotland, a peculiar spiritual interest. Such was, in some measure, the case at Kilsyth, under the ministry of Mr Burns' father, old Dr William Burns. But there was now a sound of rain. On Tuesday, 23d July 1839, Mr Burns preached in his father's church from the words, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. cx. 3); when, to use his father's words, "a scene which can scarcely be described took place. For a time the preacher's voice was quite inaudible. A psalm was sung tremulously by the precentor and by a portion of the audience, most of whom were in tears." On the following Thursday, 25th July, Mr Burns preached in the market-place to 3000 people. Of that solemn time, Mr Bonar writes,— "While pressing on this audience immediate acceptance of Christ with deep solemnity, the whole of the vast assembly were overpowered. The Holy Spirit seemed to come down as a rushing mighty wind, and to fill the place. Very many were that day struck to the heart; the

sanctuary was filled with distressed and inquiring souls."

On 8th August, Mr Burns returned to Dundee, where, two days afterwards, the same power was manifested under his preaching. Then followed a time ever to be remembered. Of the incessant labour connected with the work, the chief burden fell upon Mr Burns. Nothing but a frame and a voice like his, both of uncommon strength, could have borne it. Out of doors or indoors, as he had opportunity, he preached without ceasing. There were not a few who looked coldly on Mr Burns and his work, but wherever he went God prospered him, giving testimony to the word of his grace. There was, in those memorable days, as the writer well remembers, a wonderful power in Mr Burns' ministry. Often his words would come like the stroke of a sword. Yet his whole style of preaching was eminently solid, and as free as could well be imagined from the excitement sometimes too common in what is termed "revival preaching." It was while he "*reasoned* of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," that sinners trembled.

Mr Burns continued to preach all over Scotland, in the north of Ireland, and as far south as Newcastle, till, in 1844, he began to feel as if his special work in this country were nearly finished. Having had many requests to go to Canada, and the providence of God appearing to open the way, he set out for that country. There he went everywhere, preaching the word, and there, too, he was greatly blessed. Many of the French-speaking Canadians, to whom he was able to preach in their own language, heard him gladly. By others he was bitterly opposed. While preaching in Montreal, in the open air, he was on one occasion fiercely assailed by the Romanists, who tauntingly asked him *what commission he had to shew, warranting him to preach?* Mr Burns

calmly turned to Rev. xxii. 17, reading aloud the words, "Let him that heareth say, Come!" and adding, "I have heard, and there is my commission to say, Come!" Many testimonies also have been borne to his great usefulness among both officers and soldiers of the 93d regiment, at that time in Canada.

After his return from Canada, and having again laboured abundantly in Scotland, Mr Burns was led back anew to his early thoughts of the foreign mission field. Though he knew it not, a second great life-work lay yet before him. The English Presbyterian Church, after, for two long years, looking and waiting in vain for a man to be their missionary to China, had actually resolved to turn to some other heathen field, when, at the meeting of Synod at Sunderland in 1847, to their joy and surprise, William Burns appeared among them, and offered himself for the work. On being asked when he should be able to set out, he pointed to his carpet-bag beneath his seat, and replied, with characteristic simplicity, "I could go *to-morrow*." His offer was at once accepted, and, after remaining a brief time, spreading in England an interest in the mission, he, in 1847, proceeded to Hong Kong.

Having spent a year in studying the Chinese language (of which he afterwards mastered some five or six different dialects), and in doing mission work as he had opportunity, in 1848 he began to preach the gospel to the Chinese in their own tongue. For twenty years he laboured incessantly in his beloved work, sometimes amid difficulties which would have daunted a less devoted man. The only interval was a brief visit to this country in 1854-55, that he might care for his invalided fellow-labourer, Dr Young, who died soon after his return. To tell how wonderfully his labours were blessed in China, not only to individual souls, but in the

raising up of native churches among the Chinese, would be almost to recount the history of the mission with which he was so long connected. Writing from Pechuia, a town a few miles from Amoy, in 1854, Mr Burns said, of the success of the gospel there, "What I see here makes me call to mind former days of the Lord's power in my native land."

Towards the close of 1867, at Neu-Chwang, a sea-port town in the far north of China, he became seriously ill, from the effects of a chill which he had received. Shortly after the new year, he began to apprehend what the end might be. He wrote from his deathbed, on the 15th January, his last letter to his honoured mother, telling her of his happiness, his readiness for the Lord's will, whether it were to live or die, and not to sorrow overmuch if he were to be taken away.

About a week before he died he became much worse. One who then visited him read and repeated passages of Scripture, among others the twenty-third Psalm. On his friend faltering at the words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," Mr Burns took them up, and solemnly finished the verses. He also greatly rejoiced in John xiv., "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you," &c. On leaving him, his friend offered up the Lord's prayer, when, at the close, Mr Burns slowly and earnestly repeated, "FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY.—AMEN." These were the last conscious words he uttered.

He died at Neu-Chwang, on the 4th April 1868, and was buried in the foreign grave-yard at that place.

Thus passed away, at the age of fifty-three,—as a shock of corn fully ripe,—in labours, if not in years,—one of the most devoted men, and

noblest missionaries, whom God has given to the church in modern times. His fellow-labourer in China, the Rev. W. S. Swanson, has thus spoken concerning Mr Burns:—"He was a thorough scholar, with a well-furnished and an active mind; he possessed in no ordinary degree a sound judgment, and a large amount of common sense; he was one of the ablest and most popular preachers of his day; he was a man of great energy, indomitable perseverance, and of ardent zeal. In personal intercourse with him, one thing struck me above all others—his prayerfulness; and herein I believe we get some insight into his remarkable success and power. No matter what he did, or had to do, whether of importance or of a nature you might call trivial, he made it a matter of prayer. This prayerfulness of his seems to me to be the outstanding feature of his Christian life and his missionary work. Another very marked feature of his character was his faithfulness. You never could mistake what he was, nor whose servant he considered himself to be."

That he might have the better access to the people, Mr Burns, in later years, became as one of themselves, wearing their dress, and—perhaps, alas! too much—living as they lived. There is cause to fear that the poorness of his food, under such toil, may have weakened his body, and hastened his end. Many in Scotland will feel interested with the likeness, for such it really is,

of the devoted missionary, in the dress in which he used to go from village to village preaching Christ to the poor heathen in China. How changed his countenance since, in the vigour of his early manhood, he was wont to lift up his voice like a trumpet, in Perth, or in Dundee, in the villages of Strath-tay, or on the High Street of Edinburgh! The eyes of some who, in early life, received from him the message of salvation, may perhaps fill with tears, when they think that they shall never see that toil-worn face in this world again.

If it be true that "we can make our lives sublime," surely William Burns has left a sublime life-history behind him. Honoured in his work, in this land at least, perhaps beyond all men of his time, there have yet been few so "deaf to this world's music," few who seemed so unbrokeably to lead "a life hid with Christ in God." In grand simplicity of purpose—in burning love to the souls of his fellow men—in true deadness to the world—in holy zeal for the glory of God—what a noble example has he not left to us all! Are we in any measure following in his footsteps, even as he followed Christ? His usefulness to others began with his *conversion*. Has *ours* ever had such a beginning? Shall *we* ever share the unutterable glory of the promise, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3)

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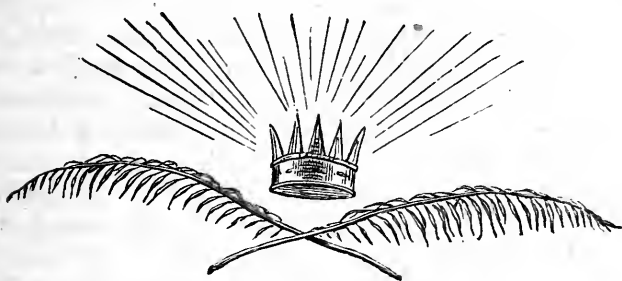
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REVELATION VII. 7-17.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands : and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more : neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

It is one thing to read these words with a poet's eye, and another thing to read them with the eye of a Christian. Oh that the Spirit may tear away the veil from our hearts, and show us the grand realities that are here. The word is sweet and profitable—

1. *For the awakening of the ungodly :* that you may see what are the exercises of the heavenly world, and how

unfit you would be for them. I suppose many of you feel that you have not washed your robes, that you could not sing their song. Then you must be on the road to hell.

2. *For the instruction of believers.* It shews you what are the chief employments of that happy world, where we shall so soon be—it gives you the key-note of the heavenly song—it teaches you to spend much of your

time in the same exercises in which you shall spend eternity.

3. *For comfort to afflicted believers.*—It shews you how short your trials will be. These light afflictions are but for a moment; you need not murmur nor grieve—a little while and we shall be with Christ, and God shall wipe away all your tears. For this end it was given to John.

I. *What John saw and heard.*

1. *A great multitude of all nations.*—When John was on earth he saw but few believers; “we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” The Church was like a lily in a field of thorns—lambs in the midst of wolves; but now quite different—thorns are plucked away—the lilies innumerable. “*Out of all nations*”—Perhaps he could discern his fellow-apostles—his own brother James, and holy Paul, and angel-faced Stephen—the dark Egyptian, the swarthy Ethiopian, the woolly-headed negro, the far distant Chinese, the Burman, the Hindoo, the blue-eyed German, the dark-eyed Italian, and multitudes perhaps from distant islands of the sea. Every country had its representatives there—some saved out of every land. All were like Christ, and yet all retained their different peculiarities. *Learn that Christ will have a glorious crown.* He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Often when I look at a large town like Dundee, and see so few converted to Christ, my heart sickens within me. Although there has been so much blessing, yet such masses of ungodly families! But oh, cheer up, Christ shall have his full crown. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Learn the power of his blood. It blots out the sins of all that multitude—sins of every name and dye. Why not yours? Oh! when such a glorious company are saved, why should you be lost? When so many are going, why should you keep back?

2. *Their position.*—They stood be-

fore the throne—yea, nearer than the angels, for they stood round about—the redeemed stood next the throne, the angels round them. This marks their complete righteousness. But the ungodly cannot stand in the judgment. If God were only to bring an ungodly man into his presence, he would die. You greatly mistake if you think God needs to put out great strength to destroy you. As a cloud is dried up by being in the light of the sun, so you would perish at the presence of God as a moth in a candle. But this great company stand next the throne—God’s eye fell upon them. In Christ they stand, not in themselves. Nearer than angels; the angels have only creature-righteousness—these have on Creator-righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is a million times more lovely than that of the highest angel, therefore they stand nearer. The righteousness of God is upon them all:—who shall condemn? If you are ever to be near God, you may come freely to him now. Why keep so far away?

3. *Their dress; white robes and palms.*—They have all the same dress, there is no difference. It is the garment of Christ. One was a far greater believer than another—made far greater advances in holiness, yet the same dress. *Whiter than the angels*, v. 13—The angels also are represented as dressed in white; yet it would appear that their robes were far outshone by the bright shining raiment of the redeemed. The angels have on creature righteousness—the redeemed the righteousness of God. This is what is now offered to you, sinners. Awakened persons are sometimes led to cry, “O that I had never sinned;” but here is something better than if you had never sinned. *Palms* are signs of victory. The Jews used to take branches of palm at the feast of tabernacles, or ingathering, which was a type of heaven. The angels have no palms; for they have fought no fight, they

have gained no victory. Every one that has a white robe has a palm. Every one that is in Christ shall overcome. Be not afraid of your enemies.

4. *Their song.*—*The substance of it.*—*Salvation.*—They give God all the glory. On earth there are many that cannot believe in an *electing* God, that God chose them for no good in them; but in heaven they all feel it, and give him all the praise. On earth, many speak of making themselves willing; but in heaven they sing “salvation to God.” On earth, many go about to establish their own righteousness; in heaven, “glory to the Lamb.” On earth, many take Christ as part of their own righteousness, and their duties as part; in heaven all give glory to the Lamb. What say you to this song? Does it find an echo in your heart? Remember you must begin it now, if you are to sing it afterwards. *The effect of it—it stirs up the hearts of the angels*, verses 11, 12,—Often on earth, when one believer begins to praise God for what He has done for his soul, it stirs up the hearts of others. So in heaven, when the angels hear the voice of redeemed sinners—brands plucked out of the fire—standing in near the throne, they will obtain a ravishing view of the glory of God, his mercy and grace—they will fall down and worship God. They will not envy the redeemed their place; but on the contrary, be filled with intense praise by hearing of what God has done for their souls. How do you feel when you hear of others being saved and brought nearer to God than you? Do you envy and hate them, or do you fall down and praise God for it?

II. *Their past history*, verses 13, 14.

Two particulars are given. Each had a different history; still in these two they were alike.

1. *They had washed their robes.*—This leads us back to their conversion. Once every one of that company had filthy garments. They were like Joshua, their garment was spotted

by the flesh. It was like a garment with the leprosy in it. Some stained with blood—spots of blood upon their garments; some with adultery; some with disobedience to parents; some with pride, falsehood, evil speaking—all, all were stained. Every one was convinced that he could not make himself clean; he could not wash his garments nor throw them off—he was brought to see himself lost and helpless. Jesus was revealed to him, and his precious blood shed for sinners, even the chief, saying to the heavy laden, “Come unto me.” Of all that company there is not one stands there in any other way. All are washed in blood. It is their only way of standing. Have you been washed in blood? You will find not one in heaven who went there in any other way. You think to go to heaven by your own decency, innocence, attention to duties. Well, you would be the only one there: all are washed in blood. Come and let us reason together.

2. *They came out of great tribulation.*

—Every one that gets to the throne must put their foot upon the thorn. The way to the crown is by the cross. We must taste the gall if we are to taste the glory. When justified by faith, God led them into tribulations also. When God brought Israel through the Red Sea, he led them into the wilderness; so when God saves a soul he tries it. He never gives faith without trying it. The way to Zion is through the valley of Baca. You must go through the wilderness of Jordan if you are to come to the Land of Promise. Some believers are much surprised when they are called to suffer. They thought they would do some great thing for God; but all that God permits them to do is *to suffer*. Go round every one in glory—every one has a different story, yet every one has a tale of suffering. One was persecuted in his family—by his friends and companions; another was visited

with sore pains and humbling disease—neglected by the world; another was bereaved of children; another had all these afflictions meeting in one—deep called unto deep. Mark, all are brought out of them. It was a dark cloud, but it passed away; the water was deep, but they have reached the other side. Not one of them blames God for the road he led them—“salvation” is their only cry. Is there any of you, dear children, murmuring at your lot? Do not sin against God. This is the way God leads all his redeemed ones. You must have a palm as well as a white robe. No pain, no palm; no cross, no crown; no thorn, no throne; no gall, no glory. Learn to glory in tribulations also. “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

III. *Future history.*

1. *Immediate service of God.*—Here, we are allowed to spend much of our time in our worldly callings. It is lawful for a man to win his bread, to plough, sow, reap, to spin and weave. Then, all our strength will be put forth in the immediate service of God. We shall stand before him, and he shall dwell among us. It will be a perpetual Sabbath. We shall spend eternity in loving God, in adoring, admiring, and praising God. We should spend much of our present time in this. Some people imagine that they are not serving God unless

they are visiting the sick, or engaged in some outward service; whereas the highest of all service is the love of adoration in the soul. Perhaps God gets more glory by a single adoring look of some poor believer on a sick-bed, than from the outward labours of a whole day.

2. *Not in the wilderness any more.*—

At present we are like a flock in the wilderness, our soul often hungry, and thirsty, and sorely tried. Often we feel as if we could go no farther, but must lie down and die. Often we feel temptations too much for us, or persecutions too strong for us to bear. When we are with Christ we shall hunger no more, all our pains shall be ended. Learn to glorify him in the fires, to sing in the wilderness. This is the only world where you can give God that glory.

3. *Father, Son, and Spirit will bless us.*—

The Lamb shall feed us—he that died for us. We shall always see our security before us in our Surety; no trembling shall ever come over our soul. He shall be one like us—a *lamb*—like the least of us; we shall learn of God from him. The *Spirit* will be like “living fountains of waters.” Here, we never have enough; there, without measure. The *Father* will be a father to us. He will wipe away tears—the tears we shed in dying—wilderness tears—the tears over lost friends and a perishing world. “What manner of persons ought we to be!”

Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne.

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DREAMS GONE, DESOLATION COME.



— See page 2.

"You may go to hell asleep, but you cannot go to heaven asleep," says one who mourned over the deep delusion of unconverted men. The river Niagara flows on very smoothly, though swiftly, when it is near the cataract; it is perhaps no where so smooth as just before plunging over the rocks. Often, often is it thus with the sinner's life and end. No summer day was ever fairer, yet no night ever came on so sudden and so dark. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and *in a moment go down to the grave.*" (Job xxi. 7-13.) Theirs has been a life with little care and much mirth. But sickness comes; fever is on them, and companions keep aloof; then come stupor, restlessness, death! Where is the soul? "Oh, *he was*

well resigned!" says some one, afraid lest the possibility of being lost should be even hinted at. But what was the foundation of this resignation, —this supposed peace? Was it not only the sultry calm before the thunder? Was it not conscience asleep? For many die thus, and have a terrible awakening. The Word of God has said of such men, "*How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh.*" (Psa. lxxiii. 59.) Life's dreams are over; the stern reality has come.

I. THEIR DREAMS ARE OVER. God has awoke them, and they cast their eyes around. "Where are we? That lurid gleam is not the dawn! These forms are not friends!" They essay to go forth, but it is in vain; they are like Samson when his strength was gone. They have come to that time of which it is written, "He died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes." (Luke xvi. 22.)

They used to have their *dreams about an Eternal World*. They thought all said about it was mere words. This present world was all. But now they see too surely that there is another world; this present world is an unreal one, and has melted away as snow. They are in a world where there is nothing of earth; none of its pursuits, none of its business, none of its sport, or mirth, or pleasure. No streets, no markets, no cities here! There is no sleep here; no time marked by hours; no bell to announce morn or even. "Time shall be no more." Earth is over. Like Napoleon at St Helena, when from the rocky height he looked out on boundless ocean,—no armies now, no marshals to receive command, no kings or kingdoms here. O, poor soul! "The fashion of the world has passed away."

They used to have their *dreams about Sin*. They fancied it was a fiction; nothing real. Stolen waters were sweet, and forbidden fruit to

be desired. But the dream is over. They see that sin is awfully real; the smallest sin has in it the sentence, "Thou shalt die." Every sin appears now a mighty mountain overhanging the soul, crushing out of it all hope, and overwhelming it with curse and wrath. They see, they feel the sting of sin; it has begun to inflict the wounds which none can ever heal. "The wages of sin is death." (Romans vi. 23.) What a meaning there is in that saying now! That death is no dream.

They used to have their *dreams about Hell*. They said it was nowhere; they scoffingly proclaimed that the idea of it was only a device of some who wished to terrify their fellows. They were sure that God had never kindled any such fire, and would never doom any soul to any such prison. But they have been rudely awakened out of their dream. They see hell now. There it is! stretching out on every side. They will never forget the gates that shut upon them as they entered, precluding every hope of escape. O dreadful darkness! tormenting devils! unfeeling company! Now and then, it may be, some of the lost cry one to the other, "How long?" and one to the other utters the terrible response, "For ever and for ever!" They find there is a real hell, and that it has everlasting pains, and thirst such as a man sometimes felt on earth when he would have given kingdoms for one drop of water; and above all, that it has remorse, and fear, and every form of misery, ceaselessly sweeping through their soul, as the wild winds used to do over earth's sea when it could not rest. Christ's threefold utterance is true: "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 44, 46, 40.) The infinite God in very truth has poured out vials of wrath on sinners.

They used to have their *dreams about God*. They were sure it would be found that God was too merci-

ful to send even one soul into misery. They were sure He was not what some few people asserted that the Bible said he was, a God who punished every violation of His holy law, and insisted on satisfaction being found by the sinner ere He would receive him into heaven. But they have been, alas! suddenly awakened out of this dream, and lo! yonder is the Judge, and the Great White Throne on which they read the writing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord." "He will by no means clear the guilty." Ah! they find God was speaking awful truth when He sent messengers to tell them, that "into His presence should enter nothing that defileth." They find He keeps to that solemn word spoken to the sinner on earth about Jesus: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not *shall be damned.*"

Yes; *as a dream when one awaketh!* There is another world. There is reality in sin. There is an eternal hell. God is not only loving and gracious, but just, holy, and true to His word. It is said that once, somewhere in the Mediterranean, many years ago, a captain with his ship had come upon a sunken rock, and barely escaped. On coming home, he told the Admiralty of his discovery, and had the spot put down in the chart; but one present scoffed at the discovery as a mere imagination, and declared that he would ere long sail his vessel over that fictitious rock. In order to carry his boast into action, he did set sail, and coming near the spot, with the chart spread out, called the ship's company to stand with him and be witnesses of his exposure of the delusion. In a quarter of an hour they would be on the rock, if it existed: so the captain stood with watch in hand, and when at last the fifteen minutes had passed, shouted out, "I told you it was a mere dream; we have passed the spot, and there is nothing!" But scarcely had he uttered the words,

when a harsh, grating sound was heard, and the vessel struck; the keel had grazed the rock; *the rock was there*; it was no dream! Pale with vexation, and unable to face the men who had heard his vain boasting, he leapt into the sea, and buried his shame in the waves. Even thus, deluded soul, shall thy vain fancies be dispelled. "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terrors; *as a dream when one awaketh.*" The words of God are no dream.

2. THEIR DESOLATION HAS COME. They are stripped of everything they ever enjoyed, everything of earth; as with us, one carried to prison is carefully stripped of his dress, and of all that was his. It is in all respects utter "desolation." No rest is left, for "they rest not day nor night," while "the weary" (the believer who was so often made wearied by their ways) has entered on his eternal Sabbath. In vain do partial friends say at his grave, "He is at his rest;" the lost soul has been stripped of it all for ever.

They are beyond conception lonely and "desolate." No companionship there furnishes relief to that awful solitude; the five brethren of the rich man (Luke xvi. 20) are, when they come to join him, no better than as fuel flung on the fire. No one there breathes sympathy; no one speaks of pity; no advocate pleads even once on their behalf. They risked all, and have lost all.

Think of one doomed to perpetual imprisonment, thrust down into the deep, dark dungeon of some great fortress, and left to die and rot there, forsaken and forgotten. At times, the man may have overheard the sound of happy voices, and unmistakeable intimation that others are enjoying light and life to the full. All this, by contrast, just adds to the intensity of his insupportable loneliness. He has been dropt out of the memory of his fellow-men. But all this is a

mere hint of the inconceivable midnight of gloom and lonely desolation wrapt up in the terrible words of the prophet Jeremiah (xxiii. 39), when telling us that the Judge declares, "Behold I, even I, *will utterly forget you!*" They are left in the prison that shall never be opened,—left alone, unnoticed for ever, uncared for, *forgotten by God!* Surely this is "*desolation.*" Heaven and hope are out of sight for ever, for even God refuses now to bestow one thought upon the sentenced soul.

"O that men were wise, that they would understand this, and consider their latter end." (Deut. xxxii. 29.) At any rate, shall God's children not act like men awake, who see others asleep on the slope of a precipice? Men of God, do you not care whether or not these dreamers sleep on? A word from you might be blessed to arouse them, and break in upon their dreams. If you have reason to fear that some whom you once knew are already lost, all the more hasten to rescue those whom you can. Seek by *all* means to save some. God the Holy Ghost awakens men; but He loves to use their fellowmen as His instruments.

Awake! awake! Sleeping world, awake! We tell of great realities. It is no dream that soothes our conscience and fills our heart. No, it is that greatest of all facts, that most solid of all truths, "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,*"—no, not perish,—"*but have everlasting life.*" (John

iii. 16.) God, the eternal Son, came down into our world, in our nature; lived, suffered, and died, "*the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God;*" and on the resurrection morning the Father sealed His work as all complete. Whoever receives this Saviour enters the family of God at once. (John i. 12.) Thousands upon thousands have in their own experience proved the reality and greatness of this salvation. They tell you it is no dream that Christ the Saviour meets the cravings of the heart and conscience. It is no dream that Christ is "*altogether lovely.*" It is no dream (they all accord in testifying) that "*he who cometh to Him shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Him shall never thirst.*" (John vi. 35.)

Lose no time, for the Lord is coming quickly to take vengeance on all who obey not the gospel. (2 Thess. i. 8.) Come and prove for yourselves all we say. You shall have "*joy and peace in believing*" (Rom. xv. 13), and never more be in danger of the "*desolation*" and appalling surprise of those who live upon their dreams. Come and try the Fountain open for sin. Come and reason with Him who shews you how scarlet sins become white as snow. (Isa. i. 18.) Come and hear that most substantial and most satisfying of all truths,—"*Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*" (1 Tim. i. 15.) "*By Him, whosoever believeth is justified from all things.*" (Acts xxiii. 39.) *Christ believed in* is peace to the soul, and true peace is no dream

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MAY 1870.

"HEREIN IS LOVE."

1 JOHN IV. 10.



See page 3.

It is to *man* that this love of God comes; it is on *man* that this love is shed down; it is to *man* that our eye turns when we hear the words of grace, "Herein is love." It is *sin* that has drawn out the great truth, "God is love"; and it is to the *sons of men*, in the depths of their sins, that the good news have come, which tell of a love that "passeth knowledge," and say to us, "God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

Love, in all its fulness, can only be known where there is *sin*. Nothing else can draw it out in all its wide compass, or shew its breadth and length, its depth and height. Love to the good and holy is but half the love of God. The love which fills heaven and gladdens its dwellers, is a very different thing from that which has come down to earth. Love to the loving and the loveable is not the same thing as love to the unloving and the

unloveable. It needed all man's sin and all earth's evil to bring out the largeness of the love of God. Heaven and the heaven of heavens could not contain the love, nor could the blessed beings there give sufficient scope for the "riches of grace." That grace needed earth; it needed man; it needed guilt; it needed all the hatred and vileness of a human heart in order to get vent to itself.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Yes; he first loved us! It was our evil, not our good, that drew out his love; that free, rich, boundless love which the many waters could not quench nor the floods drown. Herein is light (we might say, in illustrating the apostle's meaning here); not that earth gives light to the sun, but that the sun gives light to earth. Thus "love is of God," as light is of the sun. Love comes out from God to us, unbidden and undeserved; love whose fountainhead is the bosom of the God of love.

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten into the world that we might live through him." The great proof and pledge of love was the sending of His Son, the giving Him to be the propitiation for our sins. In this gift was revealed the love both of the Father and the Son. In this gift was contained the love of Godhead. In this gift was wrapt up pardon; and life, and peace. Herein is the assurance of the forgiving love of God, love that can pardon all sin and receive all sinners, yet without being itself dried up, or cooled, or dishonoured. Love sent the Son; love gives the pardon; love embraces the prodigal; love rejoices to exchange the curse for the blessing.

Love has thus provided the propitiation; and in that, a channel for love to flow down by, so that everything which might have stayed the

liberal hand of love has been taken out of the way. Love can now get full vent to itself, and can approach the sinner to gladden him with the large stores of a bounty as righteous as it is divine. God is now glorified both in loving and in giving. God is now glorified in pardoning and in saving. Such is the value of the atoning blood. Such is the efficacy of the great propitiation, the perfect burnt-offering presented on Calvary, under the shadow of which we sit safely down and are "quiet from the fear of evil"; for no calamity, no condemnation, can reach the man who has sought shelter at the altar, and who has accepted the perfection of the never-failing substitute instead of his own imperfection and unrighteousness.

HEREIN IS LOVE. In this was manifested the love of God. God "*commendeth* his love" to us; unbought, unmerited, unsought, yet not the less true and boundless; not the less earnest and sincere. Of this fountain of love each sinner is invited to drink. It is open and free. Over it is written the glad inscription, with its world-wide invitation, "Whosoever will." "Let him that is athirst come."

"Oh what wonders love has done,
Yet how little understood."

I. *This love has remembered us in our low estate.* (Ps. cxxxvi. 23.) God has not lost sight of the sinner; and all the sinner's efforts to forget God has not made God forget him. Divine compassion, even for the most worthless, remains still fresh and deep. Into the farthest region of the far off country, the father's yearnings pursue the prodigal. Over hill, and moor, and stream, and desert, the shepherd follows his wandering sheep, making the cliffs re-echo with his "Turn ye, turn ye"; all the more in earnest as the sheep strays farther, losing itself in thickets, or falling over rocks, and shewing no desire to return. Well did Luther sing—

"No tender parent's gentle breast
Yearns like thy God's to make thee blest."

He hath remembered us in our low estate; nor is there any part of that low estate, even the worst, into which his pity has not followed us, and from which his love is not willing to rescue us. God is in earnest with the sinner, however heedless the sinner may be of God.

II. *This love has provided a ransom.* (Job xxxiii. 24.) Without a ransom there could not be deliverance. It must be a goodly price that can open the prison doors and set the captive free. The ransom has been found; the doors are open; the criminal may leave his low dungeon. We read of a Norwegian fisherman whose son had been seized by pirates, and chained in an Algerine dungeon. A sailor brings the news that the son is yet alive, but can be ransomed only by a large sum. The poor fisherman resolves that, cost what it may, his son shall be set free. He sets himself to toil, and save, and deny himself; till in the course of some ten years he finds he has enough. By the first vessel he sends his gold by the hands of a trusty sailor to ransom the captive. Scarcely has the vessel sailed when he betakes himself to the cliff above the village, and there from early dawn to latest evening he sits watching for the first glimpse of the returning ship. He sees it at last; and as it nears the harbour, hastens down to embrace his lost son. Alas! His son is not there. The sailor has brought back another captive instead, by mistake. He has only ransomed a stranger! But this does not daunt him. He is now growing old and his limbs less vigorous for work. Yet, work he will, till he has gathered a second ransom. With the same fond eagerness as before, he begins his toil, and goes on, unrelaxing and unwearying, in spite of old age, till he has enough. Again he puts his hard-earned gold in the hands of a friendly seaman;

and, as formerly, betakes himself to the well-known cliff to watch and wait, his white hair streaming in the breeze, and his old eye looking into the dim horizon to catch sight of the first topmast. At last, it comes; the white sail gleams; the vessel nears; he hurries to the shore; and now, without mistake, he clasps his beloved boy! Ransomed twice over; and by a life of severest toil and hardship, how doubly precious and dear is he now. The ransom is found; the prisoner is rescued; he can now die in peace. Such are the ways of God toward us; such his tenderness and pity; such his sufficient and effectual ransom. His full and far-sounding message now to the sons of men is, "Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom."

III. *This love has sent the Son.* The Son is at once the messenger, the pledge, and the measure of his love. He *spared not* his Son! "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God *sent* his only begotten into the world that we might live through Him." "God so loved the world that He *gave* his only begotten Son." "We have seen and do testify that the Father *sent* the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "God *sent* not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." This mission of the Son is the mission of love. It is the exhibition and proclamation of the Father's love. He has sent his only begotten Son! This Son has come. He came with blessing and salvation. He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; to seek and save that which was *lost*. His errand is with the *lost*; his words are to the *lost*; his eye is on the *lost*; his hands are stretched out to the *lost*. "Why will ye die," he says; "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He means what

he says; and he says only what he means. His words are the utterance of his heart, as he pleads, and pleads, and pleads with dying men.

IV. *This love has made Him the propitiation for sin.* A propitiation is that which appeases anger; not by words or arguments; but by removing that which occasioned the displeasure, by making it a just thing in God to treat the sinner as if he had not provoked God or deserved his anger. The whole service of the tabernacle spoke of propitiation, but especially the altar and the mercy-seat. In these we see propitiated righteousness; righteousness no longer frowning on the sinner, but holding out pardon, and beseeching him to be reconciled.

This propitiation has been made. It was made on the cross; that which was done so many ages ago has lost none of its value, but is as efficacious as at the first. By it we are invited to favour; we are presented with a true and genuine pardon; we are reconciled to God and brought nigh through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The propitiation is in the blood; for without shedding of blood is no remission. The blood-shedding on Calvary has done the work; and it is to a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat that we are invited to go. "In Him we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Unpropitiated righteousness is an awful thing. But now since God has sent his Son as the propitiation for our sins, only they who refuse the sacrifice have anything to fear. To

those who consent to take it, and use it in their dealings with God, this righteousness is a blessed thing. It frowns not on the sinner, but only smiles. It repels not, but welcomes and receives with gladness the chief of sinners. It beckons nigh the far off. It says to them that are of a fearful heart, Fear not. It comforts the feeble minded. It dispels the doubts of the doubter. It says to the troubled, Go in peace. Propitiated righteousness takes the sinner's side. It is both for God and for the sinner. It magnifies both law and love. It proclaims both truth and grace. Out of it cometh glad tidings to the unrighteous; so that where sin hath abounded grace does much more abound.

And this is *peace*, as well as *pardon*; righteous peace as well as righteous pardon. Here is peace for the troubled soul. Here is rest for the weary, and joy for the sorrowful. Here is sunlight for a dark earth; morning for the world's midnight. For he who believeth God's record concerning all this comes at once into the possession of this peace, and rest, and joy. Not by working a work; but by listening to a message,—that message in which is contained the free love of God to sinners.

O sinful man, take the pardon. O sorrowful spirit, accept the joy. O burdened child of earth, consent to the removal of thy burdens by him who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1870.

THE BLIND BLASPHEMER.



ONE evening last winter, two Christian men in London were proceeding to their "labour of love" on the Lord's day. They were renting a large hall for Sabbath evenings, and using it to attract the attention of those who attended an infidel meeting in the neighbourhood. Their plan was to open the hall, and allow free discussion.

They allowed an infidel to occupy the chair, and allotted equal time to object to and defend Scripture statements and doctrines. One-half the

platform was allotted to Christians, the other to unbelievers; and the subject on the evening in question was, "Has man an immortal soul?" Among the infidels was a tall, finely-formed old man, with hair and beard of almost snowy whiteness. He was totally blind; but his affliction did not prevent him from keenly attending to the debate, and manifesting intense delight or disgust, as the opinions expressed coincided or disagreed with his own.

When his time arrived to speak, it

was a painful and miserable sight to witness the tall form writhing with malignity, as he stood uttering the most awful blasphemy. His denunciation of everything held dear by Christians was so vehement, that several of the female portion of his hearers hastily left the hall. It was a sensible relief when his allotted time was expired, and the storm of hisses subsided.

For two hours the debate was continued. At its close, a prayer meeting was announced, a few women and some of the Christians on the platform alone remaining.

"I should like to see that blind man at home," said one of the men who rented the hall. During the ensuing week he carried out his intention.

He found the blind man to be an ornamental basket-maker. . . "I have come to see you," said he. "Do you remember my voice so as to know who I am?"

"Of course I do," replied the blind man; "and I know what you have come for too, as well as you do yourself. You have come to try and convert me, my boy, but it won't do. I am tougher than you think; even twenty free tea-meetings would'n't do it."

"Nevertheless, I have known even one free tea-meeting do good work in that way," replied the visitor; "but I should like to know your opinion of what death does to a man when it comes to him."

"Then I will very soon tell you," replied the blind man; "I think it puts an end to him altogether."

"What, then, becomes of the life that was in him?" questioned the other. "Or do you mean to assert that something can become nothing, though you deny that nothing can become something?"

"I don't trouble my head with such intricate rubbish," was the reply. "I don't believe any of your tales about a life hereafter and immortality. And as to all your nonsense about death-bed repentance, I will tell you a little truth

about that matter that will do you good to hear. But first shut the door, that my little daughter may not hear us, for I don't care to speak of it before her; she is fit for nothing all day afterwards. I had a son years ago. He was my eldest, and I took great delight in him. I taught him carefully when he began to grow up, that the Bible was got up by priests for a trade, and that they had invented the idea of God for the same purpose; and it was his delight to go with me on Sunday evening to our hall. And I tell you, sir, he was as rank an infidel as ever breathed, but a good son to me and his mother, and honest and kind to all about him. But he became consumptive, and got worse and worse. One day the doctor came to see him as usual, and there was that about him which made the doctor shake his head. The next time I went into his room he put his thin arms round my neck, and he said: 'Father, I am going away from you. The doctor says I am dying, and I think it's true; but I have not the least fear, father—I firmly believe there is no God, and no hereafter; and even if there were any God, I have nothing to fear then, for I can safely say I have never done any body harm.' And so, sir, my poor boy went on, talking quietly; and it was only a little while before he went that he began to wander, and to talk wildly about his Sunday school, and his teacher there; but I don't take any account of that. I tell you, that my boy died as he had lived, a thorough unbeliever in either God or devil, and yet he went off as quietly as a lamb; so don't tell me of your horrible infidel death-beds."

"And where do you really think he is at this moment," inquired the visitor.

"Nowhere," replied the blind man. "How can he be anywhere when we laid all that was him in the burial ground?"

"Not all," was the objection, "un-

less you laid him living in his grave. I want to know what you think has become of the life, thought, intellect,—call it what you will? That, after all, was all that you knew of him. Where is that?"

"Gone, vanished, dissipated," was the reply.

"Then you really mean to say that the something that was your son has now become nothing?" asked the tall man.

"There was nothing but what we laid in his grave," was the answer.

"You must feel that is simple untruth and evasion. You have spoken tenderly of his love for you, and of his good moral qualities—what has become of these things?" rejoined the visitor.

"I don't know," was the reply, evidently uttered without intention to speak at all.

"You must believe that if there be a hell your son has gone there, and that you, and you only, have consigned him to eternal despair."

The reply of the blind man consisted of a furious reiteration of the blasphemies of the previous Sabbath.

Shocked and saddened, the visitor withdrew, followed in his retreat by the insolent blasphemy in which the blind man seemed to take a delight absolutely fiendish.

On the following Sabbath his opposition became more and more virulent, until it formed a question whether he should be allowed to speak again in the meeting. This question was settled by the blind man suddenly ceasing to attend the meetings. . . . At length some inquiries were made concerning him, and it was found that he had been taken ill, and was not expected to live. Hoping that illness might have softened his heart, the former visitor called upon him, and was met with,—

"Well, metaphysician, come to try again, eh?"

"We are not to be weary in well-

doing; we had really become anxious about you, and I volunteered to call on you; and here I am."

"What for?" queried the blind man. "Have you come to administer spiritual consolation?" He followed with words of bitter mockery. Not, however, of blasphemy; and so the visitor was encouraged to persevere in attempting to reach his conscience, and he consequently gently offered to read and pray.

"If you do try that on," was the reply, "I'll blaspheme you out of the house pretty quickly. I have told you already that I would not have it, and I meant what I said. Sit down like a man and talk politics, or something sensible."

"I cannot now," said the visitor. "I shall be most happy to read God's Word to you, and to pray for and with you, if you will allow me; but I will have no part in helping you pleasantly to pass along the awful road on which you are certainly going, and the end of which may be very near."

"Then go about your business," was the angry reply, "and make room for some better fellow, and don't come here any more till you are sent for."

"Do so," rejoined the visitor, "and when you send I will come gladly," and so they parted for that time.

Passing out, he was beckoned into the parlour by a middle-aged woman, who, covering her face, burst into tears.

"Oh! what shall I do for him?" she said. "Oh, sir, you are used to deal with such as he. Can't you say or do anything for him? He has always been kind and good to me and the children; but, oh! sir, I believe, though he does not: and I fear he is going to hell, as my eldest boy did, and that they will soon be there together."

"Did you hear what he said when I offered to pray with him?" asked the visitor.

"Oh yes," replied the woman;

"but he changes so. Sometimes he is quite free from pain, but at other times he suffers such agony that he does nothing but groan and scream for mercy. Then you may read or pray, or do what you like; but as soon as the pain leaves him, he will blaspheme as bad as ever."

A wild scream of agony from above interrupted her, and she ran up stairs, followed by the visitor. The strong form was struggling and writhing with the intensity of bodily suffering. "O God! O God!" he groaned out between his pangs. "I have deserved it, I know I have; but be merciful! merciful! I knew all the time that I did not believe what I said to others, and I was wrought up to blaspheme as I did. Oh, mercy! mercy! Is there no one near that will pray for me?"

Horror-stricken, the visitor knelt by the side of the bed, while the suffering man endeavoured to stifle his groaning and crying, that he might hear and join in the supplication. But as he knelt, there came upon him a cold and awful feeling, that it was useless to pray. Many times, for many years, had that visitor knelt in different circumstances, but never till then had he felt such an awful inward assurance that prayer would be in vain.

The pangs speedily returned upon the blind man, with dreadful intensity. At length the cries and struggling ceased, but the end had come. "I am in awful pain," groaned the blind man; "but that is nothing to the agony of my mind. There all is darkness—no light! no hope! no God!"

And thus he died,—a terrible death. What of the eternity? It came out at last that this hypocritical mocker had all along been convinced in his conscience that the Christians were right, though with cowardly blasphemy he held on to the end, pretending that he regarded their religion as a lie. He knew the terms of Christ's salvation; but to be indebted to another for righteousness,—to seek a renewed and holy nature,—he would not submit to it. He would rather brave it out with God.

Alas! is not the same thing going on all around us, in a form far quieter, perhaps, though not less deadly? Reader, is it so in your own case? Perhaps you pretend before men to be "a very good Christian," and sneer at those whom you secretly feel to be God's true people, as "carrying their religion a little too far," while you are perfectly conscious that it is just in this "little too far," as you call it, that there lies the momentous difference between them and you. With *them*, God's authority is *everything*. With *you*, it is obeyed, or not, as suits your convenience.

Reader, beware! If such be your case, you are yet in *rebellion*. Remember, it is vain to attempt double-dealing with God. But rebel as you are, God, in his rich mercy, comes to you once more with a call to surrender, and an offer of immediate pardon, through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—(Galatians vi. 7.)

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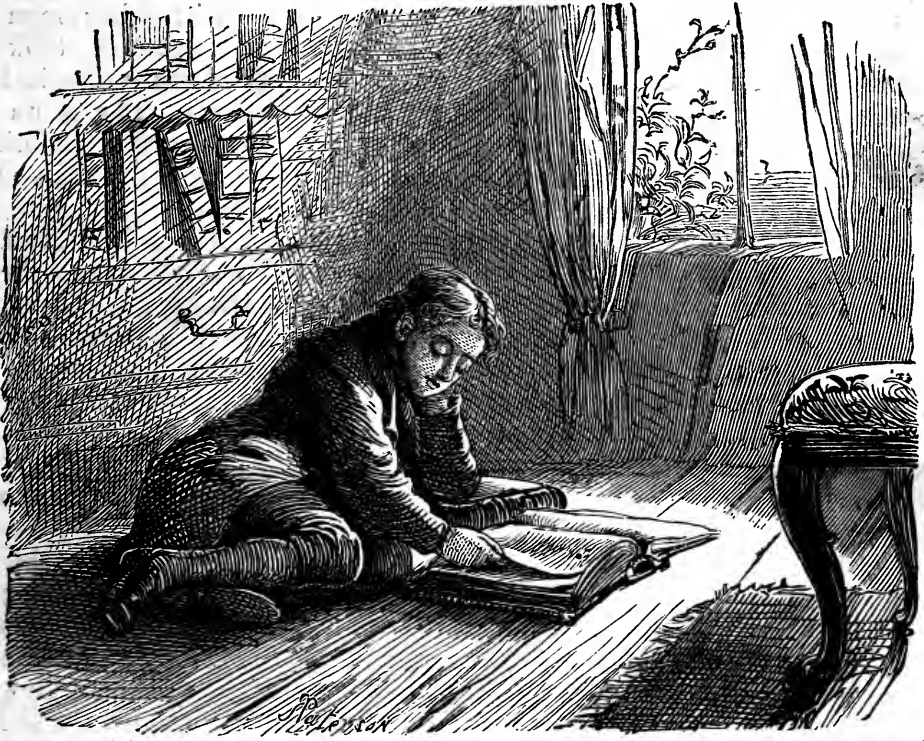
DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1871.

A BELOVED DISCIPLE :

THE LATE DR JAMES HAMILTON OF LONDON.



—see page 2.

READER, here is a sketch of a life both good and gifted. Because good, it should touch your heart; and because gifted, it should benefit your understanding. Few have shewn, by word and deed, "whatsoever things are lovely" in religion, as Dr James Hamilton did. He was, therefore, a man greatly beloved. He submitted himself to the doctrine of God our Saviour, meekly wore it as an ornament, and very attractively adorned it.

He was born at Loanend, Paisley, on the 27th November, 1814. His home, however, was the parish manse of Strathblane, the residence of his father, Dr William Hamilton. The day of his birth was one of darkness, perplexity, and distress to both parents: the life of mother and child being almost despaired of. But the father prayed to God, and said, "Here I give her, and myself, and the infant up to Thee. Do with us what seemeth good in Thy sight.

Only make us Thine own ; Thine in time, and Thine throughout eternity." It was like Abraham offering up his Isaac, and God delivered back the offering alive into the father's hands.

Again; about eight months afterwards, the sacrifice was demanded, and rendered, and restored. The child was on the point of death, and the best medical skill had given up the case as hopeless. Beside the bed the parents then deliberately and devoutly kneeled. It was their ambition, not that their first-born should be spared, but that God's name should be glorified. Again and again the father cried, "Glorify Thy name." God took the free-will offering, and again returned it. Not many minutes had passed before the child shewed decided symptoms of recovery. And James Hamilton was spared to shew forth God's glory with such light and sweetness as few men have done.

Blessed with godly parents, he grew up under the best influences; not, however, to violate these, as so many sons have done, but to reproduce them more strongly and richly on those who first gave them to him; and especially on his mother, who lived many years in the enjoyment of the sweet ripe fruits of his ministry. There would be fewer strayed sheep in families if relatives would pray for one another as the parents of James Hamilton did.

While yet a child, he shewed that passion for books and learning which distinguished him all through life. He could not read the large folio, but he would hug it affectionately, and sleep with it in his bosom. Before he could write, he scribbled mimic sermons, and read them to rapt audiences of juveniles. His father's library afforded him abundance of books. The big, old, grim, dusty volumes he liked best, and the literary society of the manse, like living books, of whom also he liked

the oldest best, both gratified and increased his desire for knowledge.

With all his getting, however, he did not neglect that "understanding" which Solomon recommends as the main object of human acquirement. Very early he shewed that religion was his chief concern. Every Saturday evening, in the manse, a prayer meeting was held, composed chiefly of working men from the neighbouring print-works and bleachfields. Their main object was to ask a blessing on the services of the coming Sabbath; and among these God-fearing men the minister's boy regularly took his place, and took his turn also in leading their devotions. It was an evidence that he had learned something, in one way or other, from the oldest and best Book of all.

On the 3d of November, 1828, not yet fourteen, he left home for the University of Glasgow. Already he was an earnest, devout student, maturely consecrating all his ten talents to the Redeemer's service, and self-dedicated to the work of a Christian teacher as naturally and joyfully as young birds take to the wing.

About three years after this, he experienced a great awakening and revival in his soul. His conversion seems to have been gradual from his earliest years; like the change which the cold earth undergoes on the approach of spring. And it was not less decided because it began very early, and grew with his growth. But at the time referred to, he had an illness, and felt as if his end were near, and this greatly increased his anxiety to make his calling and election sure. He cried, "Oh for an interest in the Redeemer's righteousness! Could I assure myself of possessing *that*, death would be welcome. No efforts of my own can save me from my sins, for the longer I live I sink the deeper in the mire. Unless a stronger arm

come to my deliverance I must perish; but such a deliverance is to be had in the Lord Jesus." He was soon reassured of this, and henceforth, with renewed health, lived a Christian life distinguished alike for its cheerful confidence, its meekness, its humility, and its manifold great works of usefulness.

Reader, have you ever heard a death-knock at your heart's door? "It is I, be not afraid," says Christ. Open, and admit Him, and He will set your house in order. But if you have never paid attention to the knock, do so now; for the present may be your last opportunity. He may come to judgment in an hour when ye think not. "Behold, I come quickly!" "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."

As a student, James Hamilton was eminently successful, and reaped many honours. He had splendid abilities, and withal a gentle, lamb-like disposition; so that whilst he commanded the respect and admiration of all by his talents, he also engaged their affections by "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." He felt it the highest honour, however, to be Christ's. He says, "My prayer to God should be, Lord make me a *Christian* philosopher; or none at all. Withhold this world's learning from me if the price of it is to be my interest in the Saviour."

Reader, if not learning, there may be something else from which you need to pray to be delivered rather than lose Christ. Is it love of money, or meat and drink, or praise of man, or even the fondness of friends?

"What time I can command, I mean now to devote to the perusal of such books as are best fitted to prepare me for crossing the dark waters." This resolution he carried out; and in the lives and works of such men as Baxter, Boston, and Rutherford, he found what his soul desired. He not only read the lives of such, but

reproduced them in writings of his own. He shewed early a talent for composition. It was devoted, like all else, to Christ's service. And from his fluent pen, while yet a student, came many delightful sketches of the worthies from whose devout Christian spirit he had received new life into his own.

His first work as a preacher was carried on in Rose Street, Edinburgh, a mission district under the auspices of St George's congregation. Here, among the street porters and hostlers and their children, he laboured with great zeal for three months, when he was appointed assistant minister in the parish of Abernethy. From this, after about two years of fruitful seed-sowing, he was translated to Roxburgh Church, Edinburgh, and five months thereafter to Regent Square Church, London, where the burden of his life-work was done. He was not long in the world's metropolis till he stood forth as one of its most prominent "burning and shining" lights. Few hearts burned with love as his did, and you could scarce find another with mental endowments so peculiarly fitted to shew it forth, and kindle it in others.

The name of Dr James Hamilton of London became a Christian household word throughout the land, and by his many soul-satisfying books, it was greatly loved and honoured in America and other distant parts of the world. The learned and cultivated flocked to hear him preach; for in him they found learning made more attractive by piety, and refinement made more agreeable by the simplicity and gentleness of Jesus. Eminent as a preacher, he was still more so as a writer; and from the field of almost every science he brought materials to illustrate and adorn everything he wrote.

Great as a writer, he was greatest of all as a Christian man. Here it is that you, reader, may stand on the

same eminence with him, however low you be in regard to gifts and acquirements of an intellectual kind. He humbled himself as a little child. Might not you do the same? He aimed at the glory of Christ in everything he did. Might you not stand side by side with him there also? By the grace of God, he loved Christ supremely, and served Him unweariedly,—by grace, his very presence was a declaration of peace, and his face a gospel sermon wherever he went,—grace supplied him with Christlike meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. And God says to you, reader, “My grace is sufficient for *thee*.” Christian! here is one feature of the grace-made greatness of the man: “While seated at His table my heart was drawn out after Jesus, and melted at the contemplation of His sufferings. I felt an inexpressible delight in again surrendering myself to Him and his service, and was willing to do or be anything for his sake.”

The amount of work he did for the pulpit and for the press was remarkable. He was always busy. Not a moment he would lose, for Christ's sake. He was always preparing some volume for publication and planning others. His pen must have traversed miles across the paper in a year. Yet he did not weary, nor fail to delight both his hearers and his readers. When midnight did not see his work done, the small hours of the morning saw him rise from bed, and prosecute the unfinished task. Very early one wintry morning, we are told, his

young wife, when she could not prevail on him to rest, and saw his weak frame breaking down from overwork, laid herself down on the rug at his feet and wept. She loved Christ's service none the less because she could not see, without tears, her devoted husband spent in it so soon.

About June, 1867, his over-wrought brain began seriously to give way. He lingered on, better and worse, till the 24th of November, when, clasping his hands on his breast and saying, “*Comé, Lord Jesus, come quickly!*” he passed away, like a sweet dream, from his friends on earth.

Reader, if you would die the death of the righteous, and have your last end like his, you must strive to live as he did. His life was spent clinging to the cross, and in the effort to imitate and honour the Lamb of God who died there, “the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. iii. 18). He ever sought a deeper sense of his need for Christ, and a livelier interest in His atoning work on earth, and intercessory work in heaven. Hence James Hamilton was a most penitent self-abased sinner. He was a firm believer. He was a cheerful Christian. He was a workman that needed not to be ashamed. He was a good and faithful servant. Reader, if you are willing to receive it, “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus,” so that you also may have a “Well done” of welcome addressed to you when you die, and leave a fragrant name behind you like this “beloved disciple.”

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1871.

DO YOU CONFESS?

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 JOHN I. ix.



"There is a confessional which ought to be denounced, avoided, and abhorred."

READER,—Among the foundation stones of saving religion, few deserve more serious attention than "confession of sins."

There is a confession which is needful to salvation, and there is a confession which is not needful at all. There is a confessional to which all men and women ought to go, and there is a confessional which ought to be denounced, avoided, and abhorred. Let us endeavour to separate the wheat from the chaff, and the

precious from the vile. We shall do well if we learn to give a right answer to the question, Do you confess?

I. Who are they that ought to confess sin?

II. To whom ought confession of sin to be made?

Once let a man have clear views on these two points, and he will never go far wrong on the subject of confession.

1. *Who are they that ought to confess sins?*

I answer this question in one plain sentence. *All men and women in the world.* All are born in sin and children of wrath. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Before God all are guilty. There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. There is not a child of Adam that ought not to confess sin (Eph. ii. 3; Rom. iii. 23, 19; Eccles. vii. 20).

There is no exception to this rule. It does not apply only to murderers and felons, and the inmates of prisons. It applies to all ranks, and classes, and orders of mankind. The highest are not too high to need confession. The lowest are not too low to be reached by God's requirement. None are so moral and respectable that they need not confess that they have sinned.

Without confession there is *no salvation*. The love of God towards sinners is infinite. The readiness of Christ to receive sinners is unbounded. The blood of Christ can cleanse away all sin. But we must "plead guilty" before God can declare us innocent. We must acknowledge that we surrender at discretion before we can be pardoned and let go free. Sins that are known and not confessed, are sins that are not forgiven. They are yet upon us, and daily sinking us nearer to hell. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

Without confession there is *no inward peace*. The heart of the little child is not easy, when he stands in his parents' presence, and knows that he has been doing something wrong. He is never easy till he has confessed. The heart of the grown-up man is never really easy until he has unburdened himself before God, and obtained pardon and absolution. "When I keep silence," says David, "my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon

me: my moisture is turned into the drouth of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psalm xxxii. 3-5.)

Some people have *no thought* or feeling about their sins. The subject is one which hardly crosses their minds. They rise in the morning and go to bed at night; they eat, and drink, and sleep, and work, and get money, and spend money, as if they had no souls at all. Of course they never confess.

Some people are *too proud* to acknowledge themselves sinners. Like the Pharisee of old, they flatter themselves they are "not as other men." They do not get drunk like some, or swear like others, or live profligate lives like others. They are moral and respectable! They perform the duties of their station! They attend church regularly! They are kind to the poor! What more would you have? Of course, when sin is not really felt, sin will never be confessed.

Some people are *too indolent* and slothful to take any step in religion so decided as confession. Their Christianity consists in meaning, and hoping, and intending, and resolving. They can even approve of the gospel. They hope one day to repent, and believe, and be converted, and become thorough Christians, and go to heaven after death. But they never get beyond "hoping." They never come to the point of making a business of religion. Of course they never confess sin.

In one or other of these ways thousands of persons on every side are ruining their souls. In one point they are all agreed. They may sometimes call themselves "sinners" in a vague, general way, but they have no real sense, or sight, or understanding of sin. And the result in each case is, They know nothing practically of confession of sins.

Reader, if you have learned to feel and confess sin, you may well thank God and take courage. Who told you that you were a guilty sinner? What moved you to begin acknowledging your transgressions? These feelings do not come from man's natural heart. The devil does not teach such lessons. Reader, these feelings come down from above. They are the precious gift of God the Holy Ghost. It is His special office to convince of sin.

2. *To whom ought confession of sin to be made?*

Sin, to speak generally, ought to be confessed to God. He it is whom we have chiefly offended. His are the laws which we have broken. To Him it is that all men and women will one day give account. This is what David felt: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Ps. li.)

But must we leave the matter here? Can vile sinners like us ever dare to confess our sins to a holy God? Must not the remembrance of His holiness make us afraid? Is it not written of God, that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity?"

I thank God, these are questions to which the Gospel supplies a full and satisfactory answer. The Gospel reveals One who is exactly suited to the wants of souls which desire to confess sins.

I say then that sin ought to be confessed to God in Christ. I say that sin ought specially to be confessed to God manifest in the flesh,—to Christ Jesus the Lord,—to that Jesus who came into the world to save sinners,—to that Jesus who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and now lives at the right hand of God to intercede for all who come to God by Him. He that desires to confess sin, should apply direct to Christ.

Christ is a great High Priest. It is His peculiar office to receive, and

hear, and pardon, and absolve sinners. Christ is a High Priest of Almighty power. There is no sin that He cannot pardon, and no sinner that He cannot absolve. Christ is a High Priest of infinite willingness to receive confession of sin. "Come unto me," He says, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Christ is a High Priest of perfect knowledge. He knows exactly the whole history of all who confess to Him. People may deceive ministers by "good words and fair speeches," but they will never deceive Christ. Christ is a High Priest of matchless tenderness. "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Christ is a High Priest who can sympathize with all that confess to Him. He knows the heart of a man by experience, for He had a body like our own, and was made in the likeness of man.

Reader, this great High Priest is the Person whom you and I ought specially to employ in our confession of sin. It is only through Him and by Him that we should make all our approaches to God. In Him we may draw near to God with boldness, and have access with confidence. (Ephes. iii. 12.)

Is there any need for confessing to priests or ministers? There is none. There is nothing they can do for a sinner that Christ cannot do a thousand times better.

Is there any Scriptural warrant for confessing to priests or ministers? There is none. There is not a passage in the New Testament which commands it. St James bids us "confess our faults to one another," but he says nothing about confessing to ministers.

Finally, Is any good likely to result from confessing to priests or ministers? I answer boldly, there is none. Ministers can never know that those who confess to them are telling the truth. Those who confess to them will never feel their consciences really

satisfied, and will never feel certain, that what they confess will not be improperly used. Above all, facts, stubborn facts, abound to shew that the practice of confessing to ministers, has often led to the grossest and most disgusting immorality. A living writer has truly said, "There is no better school of wickedness on earth than the confessional."

And now, reader, I shall conclude with three words of application.

1. My first word shall be a *question*. That question is neither more or less than the title of this tract you are reading. I ask you, **DO YOU CONFESS?**

I do not ask you now what your opinion is about matters controverted in the present day. I ask you a plain practical question,—Do you know anything of the daily habit of confessing sin to God?

Reader, if you know nothing of the habit of confessing sin, I have only one remark to make,—**YOUR SOUL IS IN IMMINENT DANGER!** There is but a step between you and hell.

2. My second word of application shall be an *invitation*. I address it to all who have neglected confession of sin in time past, and are ashamed of their neglect. I invite you in my Master's name to **BEGIN THE HABIT OF CONFESSION WITHOUT DELAY.**

Go this very day to the throne of grace, and speak to the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, about your soul. Keep back nothing from Him. Cry to Him as the publican did in the parable, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke xviii. 13.)

In all the volume of Scripture there are no passages so encouraging as

those which are about confession of sin. "Father," said the prodigal son, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servant, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." (Luke xv. 21-23.) Arise, dear reader, and call upon God. If Christ had never died for sinners, there might be some excuse for doubting. But Christ having suffered for sin, there is nothing that can keep you back. Only acknowledge your iniquity, and cast yourself wholly on God's mercy in Christ, and life, eternal life, shall be your own. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 18.) This very day **BEGIN TO CONFESS YOUR SIN.**

3. An *exhortation*. I address it to all who have been taught by the Holy Ghost to confess their sins.

My believing brethren, we shall never cease to be sinners as long as we are in the body. Every day we shall find something to deplore in our thoughts, or motives, or words, or deeds. Every day we shall find that we need the blood of sprinkling, and the intercession of Christ. Let us daily cast ourselves under the shadow of His wings, and cry, "Surely in me dwelleth no good thing: Thou art my hiding-place, O Lamb of God!"

—Rev. J. C. Ryle—

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1871.

COME!



COME! This is one of the most frequent words of God to man. There is no one more precious. It is indeed the word of the gospel. It explains the word "believe," and expresses even more. On almost every page of the Bible you find God saying, Come, come, come!

You tell a child to go to its father, —it hesitates; but if the father opens his arms and says, *Come*, the child flies into his bosom. This is God's attitude towards you, reader; is it your obedience and your confidence in Him? *Go* is a cold preacher;

come is the language of warm entreaty. The one points with the finger; the other opens its arms. The one looks commanding; the other looks with pity, and has tears in its eyes. Man says, *Go*; God's word is, *Come*.

If a Christian man says, *Come*, he means, come *alone*,—come *with* me, not *to* me. Or if he bids you come to him, it is not to stop there, but to lead you on where you can dwell for ever. None but God can say, *Come* and *rest*.

"Come and hear, all ye that fear

God, and I will tell what He hath done for my soul." That is good; but this is better: "Come, and let us return *to the Lord*." And this word of God's own mouth is best, "Come unto me." "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will."

I. Come,—WHERE TO? is the first question. Reader, there are other voices that say to you, Come, besides the voice of God, and of God's people. Perhaps you are perplexed by them. "*Where shall I come to?*" you say; "*one says, 'Lo, here,' and another, 'Lo, there,' and I cannot tell which is right.*" But surely, dear reader, you see that it cannot be wrong to COME TO GOD. A child may understand that *that* way, at least, is right. Your difficulty is removed, then; for you cannot doubt that God invites you, and makes you welcome.

The world says, Come. Have you the same certainty regarding that way? Its society beckons you; its pleasures entice you; its honours are inviting; and its riches hold out a strong inducement. These worldly voices repeat their calls with increasing urgency, in imitation of God, when He says, Come, *yea come!* But are *their* claims for a moment to be compared with His?

There are almost unmentionable lusts and passions that say, Come, to you,—secret thoughts and feelings that make you tremble in their company, and yet so fearfully fascinating that you can scarce leave them. Ah what misery lies in the foul mouth of their invitation! Follow them, and your "steps take hold on hell."

The devil says, Come, in many counterfeited voices. "Ye shall not surely die," he says, in imitation of God. Now, reader, it is surely better to follow what is true than a spurious imitation of it. How can you trust the devil when he cannot trust him-

self? Never in his own shape, but as far as possible in God's, he presents himself and says, Come. His promises, too, are borrowed from God; and vainly you seek their fulfilment, except from their original maker. God's "Come" is repeated from the pit. Oh how much better to answer the call from above, than from below!

Come, *yea come here*, says God. "*Where to? To the throne of His holiness? My sin cannot face that light,—it hates it.*" Yes, sinner, as a sick child dislikes the medicine. Come, nevertheless. That light has healing in its wings. "*But is not God a consuming fire?*" Only to those that flee from Him. *But does not the Law stand in the way, sword in hand?* Only if you come to the law; but if you come to God, its sword is sheathed, and its anger turned away. *But God's wrath?* You shall never know it, if you come trusting His word. Even though you think He is angry, come, nevertheless, in the spirit of a saved one who said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him." But God asks you to come, not to take away your life, but to preserve it. His unwearied remonstrance with you is, "Why will ye die?"

II. The next question is—How? *In what way come to God?* THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. "I am the way," He says; "no man cometh to the Father but by me." Believe in Him as the incarnate Son of God; in His death as an atoning sacrifice for your sin; in His resurrection and exaltation as the pledge of your acceptance, if in reliance on these things you will but *come to God*. This is God's appointed way of access. There is no other to you, reader. You may attempt another; but, like the effort to reach heaven by the tower of Babel, your attempt will assuredly fail.

Come through Christ *just as you are*. Plead nothing but His merits.

Lay your case entirely in His hands, and rely on His intercessions. Come with no plea of your own in your behalf, for really you have none. Come humbly, penitently, hopefully, as a poor prodigal child to a forgiving father. Come, by believing prayer, to God,—by it your spirit mounts up, meets, and touches Him. Come, trusting Him in Christ's name, and on the ground of His atoning sacrifice. Do it with the simplicity, single-heartedness, and earnestness of a child. "After this manner pray ye." This is how to obey God's repeated "Come, yea come."

III. The next question is—come, WHAT FOR? For mercy to pardon. "There is forgiveness with Him." In all your transgressions you have offended Him. You may truly take the psalmist's language on your lips when you come and say, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." To God alone you are accountable; and to Him alone you must come for pardon. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" This is the only way to get and keep a clear conscience. And without that, life is joyless here, and there is eternal misery hereafter. Unforgiven, the world's society, wealth, pleasures, will only multiply your torments. But why seek peace *there*, when God says, "Come"? He wants to relieve you of the burden—no other can—and the heavier it is felt to be, the more welcome you are. It is a full pardon, and a free one. Your sins may be high as the clouds, but His mercy is in the heavens. They may be crimson-dyed, but His mercy can make them white as snow. They may spread over a life of a hundred years, but His mercy waiteth still. No price is asked, for it was paid—all paid—by Christ's blood. If you come with anything of your own as a price, the strait gate will not admit you. Come, yea come, whosoever will, and take the water of life *freely*.

What for? Come also for grace to

help,—for the quickening and renewing power of the Holy Ghost. He is the merciful God, and the God of all grace. Weary slave of Satan, come for deliverance; crushed and feeble one, for strength; you mourner, come for sympathy and relief. He is the God of all consolation, and in Him is fulness of overflowing joy. And you, O cast-down Christian, battling unsuccessfully with sin, take new heart and *come*. Let that word of God be the sword of the Spirit with which you meet your antagonist. It is able enough, if you wield it aright. Come, ye doubters; ye fearful saints, weak-handed, feeble-kneed, disheartened. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted," forsake your refuge of lies and come to God, whose grace never faileth, and is all-sufficient for you. Only come, and He will help you in everything but what is sinful,—help you to believe, to pray, to love, to obey,—to hold on, to hope on, to wait on, to follow on, to suffer on, and to rejoice evermore. Come, all classes of Christians, and of sinners! There is a crown of blessing for whosoever will. Reader, there is one for thee, if thou wilt but take it.

IV. The next question is—WHEREFORE COME? For what reason? God's CALL supplies one reason, and your own need supplies another. A child sees anxiety on its parent's countenance, sees the arms held out, and hears the earnest call repeated, Come, come! It feels instinctively that there is danger near, although not seen, and it flies into the parental embrace. So God's earnest, affectionate appeals are reason enough to come to Him. How earnestly, how lovingly, how importunately He calls! There must be danger—great danger—apart from Him. He sees it threatening the ruined prodigal—for whose safety His fatherly heart yearns—and His voice pleads meltingly, Return, return! Come, yea

come! Turn ye, turn ye! for why will ye die?

In your case, reader, must His love and pity be unavailing?

Wherefore come? Another reason is YOUR OWN NEED. Surely you feel that you need God. Can you breathe without Him? Eat, drink, sleep; think, talk, walk, without Him? You depend on Him for all that supports and sweetens life. If He gives you so much, and you enjoy it, why not take more, and be happier? He pleads with you to come, that He may "supply *all your need* according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." Think of your need as a sinner. Measure it by the precious blood of Christ shed for it, and by the purchased and offered gift of the Holy Spirit, who waits to awaken, and convince, and renew, and sanctify. How great the love that first thought of your need! How great the sacrifice love made to meet it! Great reason and encouragement, therefore, you have to come. And more reason still, if you try to imagine how your need will press on you in your dying moments, when the world fades from your fixed eye, and a godless eternity stares you in the face. How would your last breath express it?

V. The last question, therefore, is most important—*Come, WHEN?* If there is another word God frequently utters in the Bible, it is the word *now*. *Come now*. "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." There is no other convenient season.

Unconverted reader, death is as near you as the next moment, all your life long. Realise your position, *always on the edge of that precipice*, and you will feel the force of God's "*Come now*." You have not a moment to lose, any more than the man whose next step will hurl him down upon the rocks, or into the fathomless depths of the sea. If you go on as you are you must go *down*, soon and suddenly. Your case is more awful than his who risks his body on the brink of the precipice. Your never-dying soul is in danger. He may stand still on the spot, and delay his destruction; but time carries *you* on whether you will or not, and if not turned to God you are ever ready to fall into perdition, as hopeless as it is inevitable. *Stop at this sentence, and consider it.*

Now, at this moment, reader, turn to God, and let your spirit rise with a child's simplicity, earnestness, confidence, and say, "Father, I have sinned! but Thou callest me, and behold I come, I come! Through Christ, accept, forgive, renew, uphold, shield, guide, and comfort me. In myself, 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,' I come to Thee for Christ's clothing, and light, and riches, and health, and happiness: to Thee who never didst send the needy empty away, who satisfiest the longing soul, and fillest the hungry soul with goodness. Thou art *my* portion now, and evermore. Amen." (Luke xv. 11-25.)

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"THIS IS WHAT I WANT."



A HINDOO, on the coast of Malabar, having had his conscience awakened, inquired of various Fakeers, or devotees, and Brahmins, how he might make atonement to God for his sins. All agreed that it was by torturing and wasting his body that his guilt was to be expiated; and the mode of doing this which was most confidently recommended, was the following:—

"Thou must drive," said the Fakeer, "a number of iron spikes, somewhat blunted, through thy sandals; and

on these sandals thou must place thy naked feet, and walk to the sacred station, at the source of the Godavery River (about four hundred and eighty miles). If, through loss of blood, or weakness of body, thou art unable to proceed, thou mayest halt, and wait for healing and strength. When thou hast performed thy penance, thou mayest hope that thy soul will be cleansed."

The poor Hindoo was in earnest to save his soul; and dreadful as the

penance was, he did not hesitate to undergo it, but immediately set out on his painful journey. At length he could go no further; and, though unwilling to lose time in so great a work, he felt himself absolutely compelled to halt beneath the shade of a wide-spreading banyan tree.

It happened that a Christian missionary resided near the spot; and beneath the canopy of this very tree he had been accustomed to take his stand, and to proclaim the words of life, in the native language, to all who would gather to hear. The poor foot-sore devotee had not been here long before the missionary came to his wonted labour. He cried aloud, "*The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin.*" (1 John i. 7.) He began to describe what sin was in the sight of God; he appealed to the consciences of his hearers; and pressed guilt home upon them; he shewed the utter hopelessness of man's saving himself by any self-imposed doings or sufferings; and he proceeded to shew the fulness and suitableness of God's way of salvation, through the blood-shedding of his own well-beloved Son.

These glad sounds fell upon the ears of the attentive Malabar man, like rain on the thirsty soil. He drank in every word; and, at length, plucking off his torturing sandals, he sprang up, and cried out in exultation, "This is what I want! this is the thing for me!" He followed the missionary home; gladly received the word, and believed it; and became a lively witness that the blood of Jesus Christ does indeed cleanse from sin; that it had cleansed *him*.

Dear friend, whoever you are that read these pages, do not think that, because the poor man whose case has been narrated, was a heathen idolater, he had therefore more need of salvation than you have. He was indeed a great sinner, but perhaps not a greater sinner than you. Indeed, in all probability, you have more guilti-

ness than he in God's sight, because you have more light. You have read, or have heard read, the Bible, which is God's word; you have heard, or you have had opportunities of hearing, the gospel preached, which is God's message of love and mercy to you; you have had godly neighbours, whom you knew to be God's people, and who would gladly have shewn you the way of salvation if you had been willing to learn it.

But, in spite of these advantages, you are, possibly, still an unconverted sinner. If so, you are under the solemnly pronounced wrath of God, for he that believeth not, is *condemned already* (see John iii. 18); and do not you think that all these opportunities and advantages increase your condemnation? They do, deeply;—whether you think so or not.

Have you ever been brought to cry, in anguish of soul,—"*What must I do to be saved?*" Perhaps you have never felt interested enough, as to whether it were saved or damned, to sacrifice a summer evening walk, or to brave a winter night's wind and rain, to go and hear the gospel; while this Hindoo was willing, for his soul's sake, to lacerate his naked feet, by walking hundreds of miles on spikes under a tropical sun! Will not his sincerity and self-devotion rise up in the judgment and condemn you?

The self-inflicted tortures did not, however, satisfy his conscience. He endured them, because they afforded him the only resource he knew of. But his heart could not rest,—he could not feel sure that all was right; and he therefore accepted with joy the "more excellent way," as soon as it was set before him. And you are solemnly warned, unconverted friend, that nothing you can do will avail to atone for one single sin, of all that dark load which is pressing your soul down to perdition.

You may go to church or chapel; you may habitually take the sacra-

ment; you may teach in a Sabbath-school; you may subscribe to benevolent and religious institutions; you may be a diligent and successful collector for missionary purposes; but, *if you have never personally accepted the blood of Jesus, as that which is to cleanse your soul from guilt*,—all these things will no more avail you than the spikes in the Hindoo's sandals; *they do not weigh one jot in the matter of your salvation.*

Is this a hard saying to you? It is grounded on "the true sayings of God." Will He be pleased with these outward works, while your whole heart and mind continue under the dominion of Satan, and of this present evil world? God asks,—*"What think ye of Christ?"* You think nothing of *Him*; and God thinks nothing of *you*.

Yes, He does think of you. He thinks with tender pity of you. He sees you going down to ruin and eternal death; and He presents to your view Christ, his beloved Son, whom He has delivered up to be a sacrifice for guilty man. To you, as to the poor heathen, comes the blessed message;—"The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;"—from *all* sin; from *ALL*! what all your observances, and works, and penances could never do, the blood of Jesus Christ can do, *and does*. It does really cleanse, then and there, once and for ever, all who come to God through it. The finished work of Christ does not need anything of yours to be added to it; if you attempt it, you spoil the remedy, and defeat its object. Christ must be a whole Saviour; He will not share the glory of His finished work with you. He will not descend merely to eke out the deficiencies of your doings. God will not accept your "doing your best," so far as it goes, and then throw in something of Christ as a make-weight. Oh no! if you are saved at all, it must be like the Hindoo devotee:—he threw away his

sandals when he found the blood of Christ;—in like manner do you throw away all trust in your own works and deservings, and cling *only* to Jesus.

"None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

And now, perhaps, thoughtfully pondering what you have read, you ask the question, *What is believing?* Let us try, in all simplicity, once more to set the answer before you, as doubtless it often before has been.

"You say 'Believe and be saved;'" said a pleasant middle-aged gentleman in a railway carriage, to whom, as well as to the rest of my fellow-travellers, I had given a gospel tract. "Your tract says, that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly be saved; that all who receive Him by faith are born of God, and are thus united to the Son of God."

"Do you not believe this yourself?" I asked.

"I have thought much, and anxiously, on the subject," he replied, "but I cannot understand it. If we are told only to believe, and we shall be saved, how can I know that my faith is of the right sort? There is such a thing as an assent of the understanding—will that save?"

"The word of God," I replied, "says, 'If thou shalt believe in thine heart.' (Rom. x. 9.) True belief causes us to receive God's gift with thankfulness; it is followed by love and obedience. Not that we are commanded to love and obey God, *in order* to be saved; but these effects—love and obedience—will surely follow a true faith."

"But what I want to know is, if I have a true faith."

"If you were in debt, and I had money, and gave you leave to draw on me for all you needed, it would not pay your debt to say, 'I hear there is money at the bank for those who apply in a proper manner,' while you yet went on struggling with poverty and increasing your

debts every day, and yet refusing to apply for the money. In that case I should know either that you did not believe I had lodged the money at my banker's for you, or else that you were indifferent about your debts, or that you were too proud to accept a favour at my hands."

"That seems clear; but still the Scriptures speak about working out our salvation with fear and trembling. That seems to imply that something is required of us beyond merely believing."

"You quote correctly," I replied: "but if you look at the Epistle to the Philippians, in which this passage occurs, you will see that it is not addressed to unbelieving sinners, but to 'the saints which were at Philippi.' He says, 'work out *your own* salvation;' so that salvation was already *their own*; as though he had given them a sketch, and had bidden them fill it up. They were to work out their own salvation, *because* God was working in them by his Holy Spirit, to will and to do of his good pleasure."

"But," said the gentleman, "I want to feel all this."

"People often do," I replied, "and they wait to feel, before they will believe God. When they have received God's word simply, they will soon feel happy; but feeling is not believing. A man who has true faith takes God at his word, and believes he is saved, because He has said that 'He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.' A simple heart says, 'I am a lost sinner; God

has given his Son to die for sinners; all He requires is that we should come to Him. Believing this, accepting Jesus as my Saviour, according to God's free gift, I will come to God, saying, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!"

"It is so difficult for us to believe that there is nothing for us to do," said the gentleman.

"There is plenty for us to do," I replied, "when we are once admitted by faith into God's family; but we can do nothing acceptable to God till then. God is willing to have you for His son, and for His servant; but you must begin by the right way. Christ is the door by which you must enter; faith is the hand that knocks at the door. Knock at the door; but do not knock and run away. Stand at the door; expect to be admitted; knock, and knock again, if there seem to be any delay; do nothing else. Do not go away! Do not think so much about whether you knock properly, as about whether Christ has promised."

"Promised what?"

"Promised that whosoever believeth on Him *shall* have everlasting life; that they who ask *shall* receive; and they who seek *shall* find; and to him that knocketh it *shall* be opened."

I have thus put on paper what passed between me and my fellow-traveller, in the humble hope that others also who know not clearly what faith is, and what God requires of a sinner, may be led to seek and find salvation, by faith in the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour.

Those who feel disposed to aid the Society in continuing and extending the gratuitous circulation of these Tracts, are requested to give their Subscriptions or Donations, however small, to the Distributors of the Tracts.

DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1871.

DAVID NASMITH,

THE FOUNDER OF CITY MISSIONS.



—See page 2.

From the conversion of Luther, of John Knox, of John Bunyan, of Whitefield, of Spurgeon, what countless blessings have flowed to the world! But there have also been many, less heard of, who have passed quietly away to their rest, the conversion of whom was as the source of a river which to this day is making thousands glad. Among the latter class, there is perhaps no example more remarkable than the subject of the present brief sketch.

DAVID NASMITH was born in Glasgow, 21st March, 1799, of parents respectable in circumstances, and eminent for godliness. At seven years of age he was sent to the city grammar school, to be prepared for the university. It was soon, however, clear that he would never be a scholar; he was therefore, on leaving school, apprenticed to a manufacturer. Exposed to temptation, he was kept from gross vice, yet he fell into sins which caused him bitter distress.

From the age of six he had attended a Sabbath-school, and at fourteen, two of his companions proposed to form a little society for circulating Bibles among the poor. Well-disposed as he was, he gladly joined them, though, as he says, he at the time understood little either of the name or duties of the office.

Under God, this seems to have been a turning point in his history. Associated with lads of decided Christian character, he marked their consistency, and was led to ponder and to delight in his Bible. "Searching the Scriptures," he now says, "I found One, even Jesus, who could deliver not only from the punishment, but also from the power of sin. He appeared to me altogether such an one as I stood in need of—a Saviour all-sufficient—yea, mighty to save. This was followed by a hatred of those sinful thoughts which I formerly cherished, and an earnest desire after holiness of heart."

The saving of souls now became his absorbing passion. He offered himself as a missionary to Africa, but his ability to acquire the native languages being doubted, his services were declined. This he felt very keenly, but saw in it the hand of God. He now, with the deepest earnestness, betook himself to Sabbath-school teaching, and to many other efforts for Christ.

About this time, Mary Watt, a poor African woman, applied to him for relief. Moved with compassion, he visited her wretched home, and found that though she attended a place of worship, she was utterly ignorant of Christ and of the way of salvation. He began to instruct her, and got her promise that she would come to hear the gospel from his own minister, Mr Greville Ewing. She did not come, but he continued to call until her promise was fulfilled. He was earnest in prayer for her; and he had ere long the joy of seeing her darkness turned into

light. She lived for many years in Glasgow a humble and consistent Christian. When the slaves were set free, she returned to the West Indies, carrying with her Bibles and tracts, to spend the rest of her life in making known the gospel to the negroes.

But the great life-work was now at hand for which the Spirit of God had been training him. Twenty-three of the religious and charitable institutions of Glasgow, which at this time held their business meetings in "the Institution Rooms," required a person, suitably qualified, to act, under the general committee, as assistant-secretary to them all. David was elected to this office, which he filled for more than six years, coming behind in no gift or grace needful for so difficult a post. In it he acquired much knowledge of business, a deep experience of the power of organised Christian association, and enlarged views of how it might be brought to bear upon the sins, and sorrows, and wants of a city population.

The 1st of January 1828, was a memorable day to Mr Nasmith; for on that day was founded the Glasgow City Mission. In March following, he was married to Miss Frances Hartridge, who, during the ten brief years of his wedded life, proved a true helpmeet in all his toils.

But labour began to tell upon his health, the conviction also now pressing upon him that his talent and duty lay in the direction of acting as a "moral agent," to induce the extension of such missions in other towns and cities, rather than of confining himself to one. He resigned his office in Glasgow. His visit thereafter to Dublin, led to the formation of a city mission there, and to his being invited to settle there, with the view of extending like operations throughout Ireland. This he accepted, at no small sacrifice, whether of feeling or of worldly means. But God was with him. By

the following year, twenty-two gospel agents were labouring in Dublin. He founded the "Local Missionary Society for Ireland," and in a twenty-five days' visit to the south, formed local missions in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Clonmel, Athy, Newtown, Mount Kennedy, Gorey, and Enniscorthy.

After a journey, with similar results, to the north, and another to the west of Ireland, he determined to visit America. In July 1830 he sailed with his wife from Greenock for New York. Landing, a perfect stranger, on the 5th September (only one of his letters being of present use to him), he yet succeeded, by the 20th of the same month, in having a city mission formed in New York. He then visited Newark, Salem, Newburyport, Portsmouth, and Portland: and he writes of all of them, "I have found that the Lord has work to do, and that the hewer of wood and drawer of water was to be made an instrument in leading to it." After visiting other places, he sailed for New Orleans, and even there succeeded in founding a mission. In August, after visiting Princetown, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, we find him in Canada, preparing to return to Europe. In Canada and the United States, he visited in all between forty and fifty cities and towns. In the States he was the means of forming sixteen city missions, and the American Young Men's Society, with eight or ten auxiliaries, besides others for the benefit of the coloured people, and of the poor. In Canada he formed in all fifteen societies.

On his return from America, he visited France, founding city missions at Paris and at Havre. On his way back to Scotland he passed through London. He saw, with deep and yearning interest, the vast field there which yet remained to be occupied. His headquarters were now for a time in Glasgow, but still his labours were incessant. In 1832 he was the

means of establishing the Edinburgh City Mission.

In an old minute-book, we find that at a meeting of eight Christian men, all save one of whom have now "fallen asleep," held in Edinburgh, on the 23d April 1832, he proposed the formation of a society for the monthly distribution of religious tracts. The proposal was welcomed, and the society was formed. Such was the origin of the *Monthly Visitor*, which now, by the rich blessing of God, after forty years of still increasing prosperity, continues to shed its monthly shower of gospel truth on almost every corner of the land.

In March 1835, he removed with his family to London. His heart was set upon a city mission for the great metropolis. He was met at first with little cordiality, and not a little coldness. But his faith overcame, and the society was founded. In a room of his own small house, on the banks of the Regent Canal, on the 16th May 1835, two friends met him by appointment, a third, who had been invited, having lost his way. "After prayer," he says, "we then formed the London City Mission, adopted our constitution, assigned offices to each other, and after laying the infant mission before the Lord, desiring that He would make it a blessing to tens of thousands, we adjourned." That grain of mustard-seed has grown to a goodly tree. It now employs nearly four hundred missionaries, labouring for Christ among the millions of "mighty London."

With a few friends, in 1837, he formed the British and Foreign Mission, for the extension of the work to other places. He then planted, in connection therewith, missions in Cambridge, Ely, Birmingham, West Bromwich, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and York. In 1838 he visited Wales and Ireland, besides many other places in England. On his return to London, after four

months' absence, he reported the formation of no less than seventy-three new societies. In proof of the humble scale on which he allowed himself personal comforts, it may be mentioned that the whole expenses of this journey were less than £35.

But the closing year had come. In February 1839, after a visit to the midland and southern counties of England, his health began to break down. On the 16th November, while on his way to Guildford, to form a mission there, he was seized with severe pain, and was carried to an inn. He passed a night of intense suffering, caused by internal ulceration, his strength rapidly sinking. To a friend he said, "There is a necessity for this affliction. I have been extensively useful, but I have not given Him all the glory. If my work is done, I shall go: if it is not done, I shall go on with it. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then,—the eternal glory." "Oh the rapture of that hour when I shall cast my blood-bought crown at my Redeemer's feet!" A medical consultation disclosed that he had but a few hours to live. Mrs Nasmith was sent for to London, but before she arrived, he was gone. He died on Sabbath, 17th November 1839, aged forty years.

On Monday, the 25th, he was buried in Bunhill-fields burying-ground, near to the precious dust of John Bunyan, John Owen, Isaac Watts, and many others "of whom the world was not worthy." All the London city missionaries followed him to his grave.

Who among us has not cause to be

humbled, when we think of a life like this?

Careless reader,—you who are living without God in the world, see in this narrative the reality of that grace to which you are yet a stranger. "That same Jesus" who made David Nasmith what he was, is as willing to save *you*. David Nasmith is dead, but in a very special sense he yet speaketh to *you*, for this message comes to you through a Society which forty years ago he was the means of founding.

Christian! you who are humbly "following the Lamb," and seeking, in his service, to do good to all as you have opportunity, thank God and take courage. Let David Nasmith's motto be yours, "This one thing I do." See what an unfolding of that promise, as sure to you as it was to him, "I will bless thee, and *thou shalt be a blessing*!"

Slothful Christian! awake!! It was eminent faith and love, far more than eminent talent, that made David Nasmith an instrument of salvation to thousands now in heaven,—to thousands still on earth,—and which, doubtless, through the seed which he sowed, will make him so to thousands yet unborn. Has God bestowed upon *you* ability,—leisure,—wealth,—influence? *What are you doing with them?* Are you using them faithfully for Him? or are you "digging in the earth, and hiding your Lord's money?" Let the closing year remind us all that the call is at hand, (Luke xvi. 2) "*Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.*"

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1872.

THE INFIDEL'S PROGRESS TO CHRIST;

OR, WILLIAM HOLMES' ACCOUNT OF HIS CHANGE.



Burning the Books.

—See page 3.

IF I begin where God began with me, I must go back to my natural birth; for since my eyes have been opened, I can see the hand of the Lord has been over me for good from the moment I first breathed the breath of life. Oh the wonderful restraint, long-suffering, and forbearance of a covenant God! I am spared to tell of his mercies, and to testify to his truth. I am a proof of his power to save to the uttermost all that come through Christ to him.

When about attaining the age of manhood, I was as full of fleshly religion as any poor soul need to be; aye, and as great an enemy to the doctrines of grace; contending against them as unscriptural and unreasonable, being "vainly puffed up with my fleshly mind." And I might have been left there, and continued to this day, and gone to the grave with a lie in my right hand.

Salvation, all of grace, is my delight, and the theme of my song, as

every way suited to such a depraved, helpless, and dependent being as I am; a sinner of the deepest dye, but enabled to rejoice in the fact that Jesus Christ is made unto us (who by grace have believed) "wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.)

From a profession of Christianity, I became a deist, in the year 1821. I did not, however, long continue there, for there appeared to me then something as untenable in deism as in Christianity. I could not believe in a God who had made a world and left it to be governed by chance; so I became an atheist, believing matter to be eternal, and all animal life the product of a peculiar organisation of matter. With such ideas, after enduring two years' imprisonment for serving in Mr Carlile's shop, I went to Sheffield, for the purpose of selling only infidel publications, and disseminating infidel opinions.

I continued in this state till the year 1839. I do not remember that I ever doubted the truth of the opinions I had thus imbibed. In the interval I had grown less anxious about making converts, saying, If they (the Christians) enjoy their delusion, let them; why should I trouble myself about it? But I sometimes used to have little discussions with acquaintances, who professed to be Christians, and they generally ended with this observation from me, "If I believed in Christianity, I must obey its precepts; I should not dare to act as you do."

It had been, during this time, a practice with me to say when conversing on the being of a God, "Well if there be one, I only ask justice at his hands, I do not want his mercy: I must be what he has made me, and I cannot believe otherwise than I do." What but covenant love, and unmerited favour, prevented the avenging sword from descending on my guilty head? And what but everlasting love, and God's eternal

purpose, brought me to my knees, with the Bible in my hand?

Thus the good Lord was graciously leading me on, and preparing me to seek the truth by providentially putting helps in my way, for I did not go out for them. I one Sunday took the Bible, and thought I would give it a serious reading. I read, and could not help believing, and I continued also to pray for more light, and a better understanding of that which I read. I could see plainly *that there was a people of God, and that they were a happy people*, interested in all the promised blessings of God's word. Further, I could perceive that God had commanded nothing but that which, if practised, would subserve to the best interests of man; and nothing exhorted to be abstained from but that which is hurtful and injurious. I began to feel a reverence for God, and cried and prayed that I might become one of his people; yea, I made great efforts at self-reformation, and many resolutions, which were as repeatedly broken. I was quite unacquainted with the spirituality of God's law, or the plague of my own heart.

I was most puzzled to believe the incarnation of the Son of God. Long did I endeavour to understand this, and thought I could not believe it unless I did so. I seemed to stick fast here; and this leads me to an incident which is worth relating. I had a bookstall, and one day a serious-looking person bought of me an infidel tract published by W. Hone. When he had paid for it he said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "No, sir." "Well," said he, "I am the publisher of that wretched tract, and buy it to destroy, as I do all that I meet with." I replied, "Why, I am one of Mr Carlile's shopmen, and I am beginning to doubt whether his opinions are as true as I once thought them." He urged me to get rid of them, and spoke bitterly of the misery he endured from

reflection on his past deeds. Soon after that Mr Hone died.

Some time after this I went to the Weigh-house chapel, and listened to the singing and prayer without emotion; but when the preacher read his text, I was overcome in a moment. It was Jesus asking Peter, "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But the next words of the Lord Jesus came into my soul in a manner I cannot express, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 17.) I believed that same moment, and by the same revelation; and the sweetness of that moment will never be forgotten. Oh! how I seemed to rejoice in the knowledge of Christ. Oh! how I rejoice that he is what he was then revealed to be.

I was compelled to give up one thing after another, the practice of which I could not make square with the word of God. I resolved to avoid them, and I prayed for help to keep this resolution, *for I began to distrust my own powers*; and the good Lord kept me, for though often urged to return to them, I never did. The books I was in the habit of dealing in now lay heavy on my conscience. I concluded I was only living by the follies of mankind, and that it was justifiable so to do: and I was also so circumstanced and connected that I knew not how to extricate myself. And when the last-named subterfuge failed, as fail it did, I became miserable; yet had not strength of mind to break my bonds, nor faith to trust in God.

I cried to God for deliverance; and after a time the death of my then partner opened my way. But I had, after all, a stock of such a description left, printed books and plates, as I knew not what to do with; they were too bad for waste paper, yet I did not like to lose all they had cost me, nor did I want to sell them to any one to make a profit by; so I

agreed with a person to sell him at sixpence a pound all I had left that I could make perfect. But, O! how conscience began to lash me as soon as I had made the agreement. I was in agony that day: at night I knelt down, but could not pray a word; at length I got out, "Gracious God have mercy, and teach me what to do." In the morning I said to my wife, "I have had no peace since I agreed to sell those things. I dare not sell them, and I have promised; what shall I do?" She said, "Sooner than they should trouble me so, I would burn them." No sooner said than set about, and I think I never made a fire with so much satisfaction in my life. I could pray after they were destroyed, and thank God for enabling me thus to do.

I narrate these things to shew the devices of Satan, the suggestions of an evil heart, and the excuses the flesh will prompt us to, to hide our depravity, and to make evil appear good. Some of my readers may possibly be in similar circumstances. To them I would affectionately say, parley not with evil; make the sacrifice, however great, and I am sure God will not suffer you to lose by any sacrifice you make for him.

Thus far had I been led, still in much darkness as to truth; sometimes feeling a hope that I should get to heaven, and that God would forgive my sins; and sometimes almost in despair, thinking I had committed the unpardonable sin. Sometimes I had access to a throne of grace, and a feeling of filial relationship to, and dependence on, God; at other times was cold, barren, and unfruitful; prayer seemed a task, and reading the word of life a burden. I went at times to church; once to G—— Q—— Street Chapel: once to another; but none of them seemed to throw light on my path. All said something must be *done*, but none told me how to do it; and I was trying to do all I could, and was willing to attempt anything,

having yet to learn that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is a finished work, and unto and upon all them that believe. (Rom. iii. 22.)

Thus briefly have I detailed a few of the leading particulars of nearly four years. I now became acquainted with a woman, who had long been a servant of Christ; and who, in conversation, told me my views were very legal. I did not know what she meant by the term, nor did I like to expose my ignorance by asking. However, I was told to go and hear Mr F—. I did not want much urging after I had been once or twice; for the doctrines he preached seemed so exactly suited to my case, that I could not keep away. It seemed too good to be true, and set me to searching the Scriptures to see if these things were so. Well, the word of God and his preaching seemed all of a piece. Oh how I used to sit and drink in what he said!

That summer, 1843, on the Wednesday evenings, he was preaching on Christ as a vine, and his people the branches; Christ as a shepherd, and his people the sheep; Christ as a door, and his people entering in and finding pasture; and oh! how I cried to God, to make me a branch, a sheep, and to grant me an entrance. He also entered into a deal of my experience, and used to say it was to, and for such, weary, heavy-laden, sin-bitten souls, that Christ was exhibited on the pole of the gospel, and crucified on Calvary. I could scarcely believe that grace was so free, and salvation so unconditional, as he described it, and yet the word of God

bore him out. Every thing I heard or read was tried by God's word, and the Lord was pleased to open my heart to receive the truth in the love of it, so that in the end the more I got the better I liked it. What am I, O God, that thou shouldest have been thus mindful of me! Thanks, eternal thanks, to Thee.

I have sometimes doubted whether all is not a delusion, and I a self-deceiver after all; whether my change be not merely a fleshly reformation, and no change of heart. If I had not the example of many of God's saints, as being similarly exercised, I should be in despair. But I take courage, and conclude it is the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and rebelling against the restraint it is placed under. It proves to me daily my own helplessness, and how needful is salvation *all* of grace. But when, by the tender mercy of my God, I am enabled to see myself "complete in him," and hear him whisper, "I am thy salvation," then I can praise him, wonder at my doubts and fears, and think I shall never give way to them again.

Thus far had I written in 1845; and now (in 1850) I am still as great a miracle of mercy, whilst every day and every hour make me a greater debtor to free and sovereign grace. It is my mercy that He will not forsake the work of his own hands, and that he who gives the grace, has eternally secured the glory that shall be the result. To Him be all the praise, for ever. Amen.

(Abridged.)

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1872.

"UPWARDS OF EIGHTY."

A MEMORIAL OF AN AGED SERVANT OF CHRIST.



At eighty his athletic frame had begun to tremble under the weight of years, and his manly form to stoop a little—strange if it had not been so. His infirmity, indeed, was so great, that his children would no longer willingly consent to his living apart from them, or following his old occupation. "Father," they said to him, "you have done enough already. It is time you gave yourself up to rest. Come, live with us. Let us take care of you. Enjoy the freedom of all our houses. Go where you

please, and when you please, and be at home wherever you go. All we have is yours. But work no more, and live no longer by yourself."

But no. He would not consent to their plan. For two years more he remained in his own house, and kept up his occupation.

Meanwhile, however, he visited every family, prayed in every house, and talked personally with every man, woman, and child of a suitable age, in a circle of five thousand inhabitants, and many were awakened by

his words. He established and maintained also a weekly union prayer-meeting, changing from house to house in a circuit as large as he could extend it. And this was the beginning of a revival, which embraced all the churches, and almost every family in the town, in its blessed sweep. And all this was after he was *eighty years old*, and so infirm, that his children thought it unsafe for him to keep up his home and live apart from them.

At eighty-two they prevailed. He was constrained to yield to their affectionate urgency. He closed his establishment and went to make home with his children. Then, in another town, some forty miles from his former residence, he was thrown into a new field, not of rest, as his children had hoped, but of activity and usefulness. Looking about him, he saw a population of twenty-five hundred or more, with all the usual church privileges to be sure, but without any one, really in the spirit of Jesus, to care for their souls. So, in the faith of an ever-present Saviour, he girt about him his coat, filled his pockets with tracts, and started out on foot, and alone. With his staff in his hand, trembling with age, he went from house to house as he had done before in his former abode, until here again he had entered every habitation, and left his affectionate warnings and importunate supplications upon the ears and hearts of every soul.

In this instance he was not permitted to see the fruits of his work in a general revival of religion, as in the other. Not, however, because it did not occur, but because he was taken home to his mansion and to his Master above, before the seed, so abundantly sown by his hand, had ripened into the harvest. His last visit made, his last prayer offered, in the last house of the whole, he went to his daughter's to rest for the night, to enter next day, as he supposed, upon a course of re-

visiting such families as he thought most needed his services.

But his work of going about like his Master to do good was done. He lived many weeks, but went abroad no more while he lived. It was the writer's privilege to see him in his room after this, but some while before his death. The interview will never be forgotten.

"Ah!" said he, "for twenty years now I have thought it would be nothing to die, but gain. But I did not know. My peace was made. I had learned also that Jesus was my surety and trust for purity and spotlessness as well as for pardon. I was ready—all ready, and waiting. And I thought that, at the word, in a moment when the summons should come, I could joyously strike tent and away. But no. I find it very different. Not so easy as I supposed."

"Ah! how is that, sir? You are not afraid to die?"

"No, not that! Thank God, not that!"

"What then, sir?"

"Oh, my brother! it is not striking tent, as I supposed—this dying is not. It is rather pulling down this old house piece by piece; and as the old frame gives way it is terrible. And yet even in this, thanks be to God, my Saviour is with me. He does not forsake me; and his grace is sufficient for me. Sometimes the cry will rise up—'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Nevertheless, again, 'Thy will, not mine, be done,' well up after the others, and all is hushed and peaceful." So this venerable man conversed, while I sat charmed at his feet.

Now, what was it that gave him such a power to bring forth fruit in old age?

Five thousand people visited after he was fourscore years old, and twenty-five hundred more after he was fourscore and two! What was the power? I asked him. He told me. Let his words to me, as well as

I can remember to repeat them, reveal his secret to all.

"I was converted young, in the place of my birth. For forty years I was a member of the church, and a Christian, too, as I verily believe, without ever having been the means, so far as I know, of the conversion of one soul, and that, too, through all the prime and vigour of my youth and manhood, from twenty to sixty. Sometimes when I think of it, I am overwhelmed with grief and shame. But I knew no better. I lived as others in the church did; kept up all the duties of religion at home and in the church—kept Sabbath, prayed, read my Bible, went to the Lord's table, and often enjoyed the communion of the Spirit, and the fellowship of Christians, thankful in prosperity, sustained in adversity, and comforted always by a good hope of glory; and yet, as I said, *never in all those forty years*, so far as I know, the means of saving one soul."

Here tears stole down his furrowed cheeks, the silent witnesses to his deep-toned regrets.

"At last, when I was sixty years old, God was pleased to visit the people where I lived, with such power as I had never before seen. Hundreds and hundreds were converted—some from amongst the most hardened and desperate of the people, and others of the most moral and regular. There was a great shaking, too, amongst Christians. I myself was seized with the conviction—not that I was not a Christian, but that I was a useless cumberer of the church; a barren fig-tree in the garden of God; worse, it seemed to me, than any unconverted sinner in the world. Forty years of the prime of my life spent in the church and in the nominal service of God, yet nothing done for the cause, not one soul won to Jesus! And when I thought to make amends by a life devoted earnestly to doing good, Satan taunted me with the idea that it would be a mockery to offer the broken rem-

nant of a misspent life to God, and ask him to use me in my old age to save others.

"But he could not keep me from making the offer of myself to the Lord. Now, however, the struggle did but just begin; for in my first attempts to benefit others, my own heart, or rather want of heart, was revealed to me, until the weight of my burden was not so much my past barrenness, as my present unfitness to do anything more than I had done in the past.

"Then came the temptation to stop and say, 'Ah! I am not fit to do anything for God: I was not made for it; and if I was, I have lived so long without using and improving my talent, that it has grown rusty—too rusty ever to be used.' Satan here, again, often taunted me, saying, 'Too old to change! Fool to think of it!' But something whispered hope to me, and I determined never to stop. Then I cried unto God in my distress, to give me his Spirit and strengthen me for his service. Resolutions proved vain, and cries for the Holy Spirit no better, until at last, I saw that the work of making my heart right, and keeping it right for the work of the Lord, was Christ's, by his own presence in the power of the Holy Ghost, not mine at all. Christ's to save—mine to trust and to serve.

"From that hour I left the Saviour's work in his hands to do, and looked to him to do it, in the fullest confidence that he would; and I was not disappointed. From that hour I found it easy to wear the yoke and to bear the cross; and, to the praise of God's own condescending love be it said, he has blessed me in his service, and prospered me in the work given me to do. And one thing I can tell you, my brother, if I have been the instrument of good, it has been the Lord with me, and the Lord within me, who has done it, and not I. If the truth concerning Jesus has been in me a well, a water springing

up into eternal life, and a fountain from which streams of life have flowed forth, I have been no more than the earthen pitcher which carries the water, or the iron pipe which conducts it. The power is of God. To God be all the glory."

Such was the story of this aged American disciple, ten times over more touching and impressive from his trembling lips, and tear-bedewed face, than from the pen that writes it.

As he ceased, reflections and questions came crowding up; but a moment only was left before the railway whistle must be obeyed, and the venerable man left to the quiet and peace of solitary but blessed waiting for his summons.

That which impressed itself most deeply of all, was the contrast between the forty years of barrenness, the forty best years of his life, from twenty to sixty, and the twenty-two years—the two last above all, of such noble fruitage to God. Forty years without the known conversion of one single soul from his influence, and the two years after he was eighty, hundreds converted! Ah! here was a contrast to be pondered well by us all.

In parting with this venerable father, one word was dropped to try him as to the source of his complacency, whether it was in himself, or in Christ. May it be forgiven, if even in the slightest shade of appearance, it was wanting in either sincerity or respect! Grasping his hand, I said, "You have done much work for the

Master and his cause, and experienced so much, that you will not be ashamed to meet him and be ushered into the presence of the Father and of the holy angels."

Looking me earnestly in the face, while a shade of sadness and surprise came over the brightness of his countenance, and placing my hand between his two, he answered: "No! No, my son, not that! *not THAT!* All I have done is nothing—all I have experienced, nothing. I am nothing. My righteousness is as filthy rags—at best no better than the torn, tattered, defiled, crossed, condemned notes of a broken bank. Thank God, I have a better hope. Jesus is mine, and I am his—and that is enough. He who has been with me through every trial in life, will be with me in death. His grace will suffice. I shall not be ashamed to meet him; for he has bought me with his blood, and sealed me by his Spirit. And I shall not be ashamed to go into the presence of his Father and my Father; for he will change me into his own heavenly image of spotless glory; and, being like him, I shall be like all who are his. Jesus is all in all. Good-bye. May Jesus go with you, and be with you evermore!"

Reader! are you *in Christ*? a living branch of the living vine, and shewing that you are so by bringing forth in *any* measure fruit unto God? Or are you a mere fruitless, dead professor, with "nothing but leaves?" Read Hebrews vi. 7, 8, and 1 Timothy i. 15.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

JULY 1872.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.



Luther at Worms.

—(See page 2.)

READER, — There is hope in the Gospel for any man, so long as he lives. There is infinite willingness in Christ to *pardon sin*. There is infinite power in the Holy Spirit to *change hearts*.

There are many diseases of the body which are incurable. The cleverest doctors cannot heal them. But, thank God! there are no incurable diseases of soul. All manner and quantity of sins can be washed away by Christ. The hardest and most wicked of hearts can be *changed*.

Reader, I say again, while there is life there is hope. The oldest, the vilest, the worst of sinners may be saved. Only let him come to Christ, confess his sin, and cry to Him for pardon,—only let him cast his soul on Christ, and he shall be cured. The Holy Spirit shall be sent down on his heart, according to Christ's promise, and he shall be changed by His almighty power into a new creature.

I never despair of any one becoming a decided Christian, whatever he

may have been in days gone by. I know how great the change is from death to life. I know the mountains of division that seem to stand between some men and heaven. I know the hardness, the prejudices, the desperate sinfulness of the natural heart. But I remember that God the Father made the glorious world out of nothing. I remember the voice of the Lord Jesus could reach Lazarus when four days dead, and recall him even from the grave. I remember the amazing victories the Spirit of God has won in every nation under heaven. I remember all this, and feel that I never need despair. Yes! those very persons who now seem most utterly dead in sins, may yet be raised to a new being, and walk before God in newness of life.

Why should it not be so? The Holy Spirit is a mighty, merciful, and loving Spirit. He turns away from no man because of his vileness. He passes by no one because his sins are black and scarlet.

There was nothing in the Corinthians that He should come down and quicken them. Paul reports of them that they were "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners." "Such," he says, "were some of you." Yet even them the Spirit made alive. "Ye are washed," he writes, "ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 9-11.)

There was nothing in the Colossians, that He should visit their hearts. Paul tells us that they "walked in fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Yet them also the Spirit quickened. He made them "put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." (Col. iii. 5-10.)

There was nothing in Mary Magdalene that the Spirit should make her soul alive. Once she had been possessed with seven devils. Time was, if report be true, she had been a woman proverbial for vileness and iniquity. Yet even her the Spirit made a new creature,—separated her from her sins,—brought her to Christ,—made her last at the cross, and first at the tomb.

Never, never will the Spirit turn away from a soul because of its corruption. He never has done so;—He never will. It is His glory that He has purified the minds of the most impure, and made them temples for His own abode. He may yet take the worst of those who read this tract and make him a vessel of grace.

Why, indeed, should it not be so? The Spirit is an Almighty Spirit. He can change the stony heart into a heart of flesh. He can break the strongest bad habits like tow before the fire. He can make the most difficult things seem easy, and the mightiest objections melt away like snow in spring. He can cut the bars of brass, and throw the gates of prejudice wide open. He can fill up every valley, and make every rough place smooth. He has done it often, and He can do it again.

The Spirit can take a Jew,—the bitterest enemy of Christianity,—the fiercest persecutor of true believers,—the strongest stickler for Pharisaical notions,—the most prejudiced opposer of gospel doctrine,—and turn that man into an earnest preacher of the very faith he once destroyed. He has done it already; He did it with the Apostle Paul.

The Spirit can take a Roman Catholic monk, brought up in the midst of Roman superstition,—trained from his infancy to believe false doctrine and obey the Pope,—steeped to the eyes in error,—and make that man the clearest upholder

of justification by faith the world ever saw. He has done so already; He did it with Martin Luther.

The Spirit can take an English tinker, without learning, patronage, or money, — a man at one time notorious for nothing so much as blasphemy and swearing, — and make that man write a religious book which shall stand unrivalled and unequalled in its way by any since the time of the apostles. He has done so already; He did it with John Bunyan, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress."

The Spirit can take a sailor, drenched in worldliness and sin, — a profligate captain of a slave ship, — and make that man a most successful minister of the gospel; a writer of letters which are a storehouse of experimental religion; and of hymns which are known and sung wherever English is spoken. He has done it already; He did it with John Newton.

All this the Spirit has done, and much more, of which I cannot speak particularly. And the arm of the Spirit is not shortened. His power is not decayed. He is like the Lord Jesus, — the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is still doing wonders, and will do to the very end.

I shall not be surprised to hear, even in this life, that the hardest man I know has become softened, and the proudest has taken his place at the feet of Jesus as a weaned child.

I shall not be surprised to meet many on the right hand in the day of judgment whom I shall leave, when I die, travelling in the broad way.

I never despair, because I believe the power of the Holy Ghost. We ministers might well despair when we look at our own performances. We are often sick of ourselves. We might well despair when we look at some who belong to our congregations. They seem as hard and

insensible as the nether mill-stone. But we remember the Holy Ghost, and what He has done. We remember the Holy Ghost, and consider that He has not changed. He can come down like fire and melt the hardest hearts. He can convert the worst man or woman among our hearers, and mould their whole character into a new shape. And so we preach on. We hope because of the Holy Ghost. Oh! that our hearts would understand that the progress of true religion depends not on might or on power, but on the Lord's Spirit! Oh! that many of them would learn to lean less on ministers, and to pray more for the Holy Spirit! Oh! that all would learn to expect less from schools, and tracts, and ecclesiastical machinery; and while using all means diligently, would seek more earnestly for the outpouring of the Spirit.

Reader, do you feel the slightest drawing towards God? — the smallest concern about your immortal soul? Does your conscience tell you this day that you have not yet felt the Spirit's power, and do you want to know what to do? Listen, and I will tell you.

For one thing, you must go at once to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, and beseech Him to have mercy on you, and send you the Spirit. You must go direct to that open fountain of living waters, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost. (John vii. 39.) Begin at once to pray for the Holy Spirit. Think not you are shut up and cut off from hope. The Holy Ghost is promised to them that ask him. His very name is the Spirit of Promise, and the Spirit of Life. Give him no rest till he comes down and makes you a new heart. Cry mightily unto the Lord, — say unto Him, "Bless me, even me also: quicken me, and make me alive."

I dare not, for my part, send anxious souls to any one but Christ

I cannot hold with those who tell men to pray for the Holy Spirit in the first place, in order that they may go to Christ in the second place. I see no warrant of Scripture for saying so. I only see that if men feel they are needy perishing sinners, they ought to apply, first and foremost, straight and direct, to Jesus Christ. I see that He himself says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John vii. 37.) I know that it is written, "He hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Ps. lxxviii. 18.) I know it is His special office to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and that "in Him all fulness dwells." I dare not pretend to be more systematic than the Bible. I believe that Christ is the meeting-place between God and the soul: and my first advice to any one who wants the Spirit, must always be, "*Go to Jesus and tell your wants to Him.*"

For another thing, if you have not yet felt the converting power of the Spirit, you must be diligent in attending those means of grace through which the Spirit works. You must regularly hear that word which is His sword. You must habitually attend those assemblies where His presence is promised. You must, in short, be found *in the way of the Spirit*, if you want the Spirit to do you good. Blind Bartimeus would never have received sight had he sat lazily at home, and not come forth to sit by the way-side. Zaccheus might never have seen Jesus, and become a son of Abraham,

if he had not ran before and climbed up into the sycamore tree. The Spirit is a loving and good Spirit. *But he who despises means of grace, resists the Holy Ghost.*

Reader, remember these two things. I firmly believe that no man ever acted honestly and perseveringly on these two pieces of advice, who did not, sooner or later, have the Spirit, and find by experience that He is "mighty to save."

Believe me, believe me, true repentance is that one step that no man ever repented. Thousands have said at their latter end, "they had served God too little:" no child of Adam ever said, as he left this world, that he had cared for his soul too much. The way of life is a narrow path, but the footsteps in it are all in one direction,—not one has ever come back and said it was a delusion.

Brethren believers, I speak to myself as well as to you. I say the spiritual life there is in Christians ought to be more evident. Our lamps want trimming, they ought not to burn so dim. Our separation from the world should be more distinct, our walk with God more decided. Too many of us are like Lot, lingerers,—or like Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, borderers,—or like the Jews in Ezra's time, so mixed up with strangers, that our spiritual pedigree cannot be made out. It ought not so to be. Let us be up and doing. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. If we really have life, let us make it known.

—Rev. J. C. Ryle.
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1872.

“WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?”



(See Page 2.)

“NOBODY WANTS YOU HERE!”

Just before the commencement of the service in my church, a note was placed in my hands, requesting the prayers of the congregation on behalf of William I——, of Duke Street, and asking me, at my earliest convenience, to visit him.

Being more than fully occupied all the Sabbath, I called at the man's house—a furniture broker's—early on Monday. I at once observed, by his wife's manner, that my visit was unlooked for, both on her part and his. On my asking, however, to see her

husband, she said, “He is in bed in the back parlour; but, sir,” she added, “I would not advise your going to him. He does not like parsons, and will be sure to insult you.”

“Never mind,” I said. “Just tell your husband I wish to see him.”

“Oh sir, I dare not,” was her reply. “If you like you can go to the room yourself, but I recommend your not doing so.”

I confess the woman's mysterious manner excited my curiosity, as well as my determination to fulfil the duty

before me, come what would. Accordingly I knocked at the chamber door. A deep, hollow voice said, "Come in," muttering at the same time a curse at the disturbance. I opened the door; and there lay before me, on a sort of a sofa-bed, a man of about fifty years of age. A look of intense suffering was stamped upon his strongly-marked features, but on his seeing me this was rapidly succeeded by one of defiance and rage. A thunder-cloud seemed to have suddenly settled upon his brow. His salutation was, "What brings *you* here?"

"I come as the minister of God, for good to your soul," was my reply.

"Then the sooner you go away, the better. Nobody wants you here."

I said, "I have not come of my own accord. I have had this note," unfolding the paper I had received the previous day, "requesting me to visit you, and desiring the prayers of the congregation in your behalf in church yesterday. The last request has been complied with. I have now come to see you, as desired."

"Then if you don't go at once, you'll repent it."

"I dare not go now," I said. "I have not come here, as I have told you, of my own accord; but being here, I must do the work my Master in heaven has sent me for. And I must answer to my God for the use I make of this visit."

An expression of contempt, mingled with diabolical hatred, now marked his features as he replied, "Who is God? Where is heaven? There is neither one nor the other."

"Yes," I said, "there is a God, and you know it as well as I do. And there is a heaven, a bright, blessed, glorious heaven; and there is a hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And there is a Saviour, who left that glorious heaven and took upon Him our nature, and lived a life of holy obedience, to satisfy and fulfil the requirements of God's law on our behalf, and to die the

accursed death upon the cross, to save you and me from perishing for ever in that terrible place of suffering and torment. Now that Saviour has sent me to tell you of his love—to tell you of his power—to tell you that, though you have brought yourself to the very verge of that pit of hell, yet if now you feel your lost and perishing condition, and will look unto Him as the dying Israelites did to the brazen serpent, believing with all your heart, He will save even such a sinner as you—even *you*; for he came to seek and to save that which was lost. Yes, he can and will save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."

I watched the changes of his countenance as I spoke. The look of scornful hate gave way to such an expression of blank, hopeless, helpless despair as I never before saw depicted on any face. I had thus stood silently awaiting the effect of the life-or-death struggle going on within, for a few moments, when at length he said, "Didn't I tell you to go away? Let me die in peace. Don't tell me of heaven, or hell, or God, or devil."

"Are you in peace, my friend?" was my answer. "I know you are not; but I come to speak to you of true peace through the blood of Jesus Christ, which 'cleanseth us from all sin.' Come, be honest with yourself. You know you are far from peace." An indistinct sentence was the reply. I could only catch the words, "not for me." Taking for granted the remainder of the sentence, I said, "Yes, *for you*—for you is this Saviour sent. Hear his own words,"—and producing my pocket Bible, and turning to the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, I read slowly the several verses of the chapter to the end of the seventh, when for the first time his eyes were lifted towards me, and met mine with a full, steadfast, and now inquiring gaze. Repeating that verse, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy

upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon," I closed the book, saying, "Will you join with me in prayer, that God may show that mercy towards your soul?" His reply, in certainly an ungracious tone, was yet encouraging enough to make me hope that I was not seeking mercy for him in vain. My prayer was short and simple, just asking the mercy that poor soul needed.

I arose from my knees, feeling that it was answered. I was too much overpowered to say more than, "May I come to see you again?"

The man's answer was, "You may come if you like."

Not many days afterwards I again presented myself before Mrs. I——, and on inquiring for her husband she said, "Oh sir, we have had a terrible time since you were here. Why did you come to disturb the poor man's mind? He was bad enough before, but he has been continually crying out that we are all going to hell—that we shall all be lost for ever. Why did you add that trouble to all we have had to bear before, through his temper, which no one can stand at any time?"

"Is it not better," I said, "he should know of hell now, while there is time to flee from it, than that he should dwell there for ever?" Then I again approached the chamber door. No sooner did William I—— see me, than, sitting up in his bed, with wild and haggard look, he cried, "Oh sir, go away, go away! Why did you come disturbing me? The devil has been sitting there where you sat, ever since; and I know he is waiting to carry me away to hell! See! there he is."

I said calmly, "Then, Mr. I——, you do not doubt that there is a devil and a hell? But why have you not also thought of heaven's glories, and of Christ Jesus, the sinner's Friend—of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost?"

"Oh, there is no heaven for me. The devil is waiting there to carry me off."

"Hear what God says," I replied: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

"Will God draw nigh to me?" he said, his face lighting up as I had not seen it before. "Will God draw nigh to one who has denied his being, has despised his mercy, has profaned his name?"

"Yes," I said, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. Only come to God, feeling your sin, your lost condition, and seek his mercy in Jesus Christ, and 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Listen a few moments while I read one of the Saviour's beautiful parables:—'A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants,

Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'—(Luke xv. 11-24.) Now God is that Father. Why should not you be that prodigal? Draw nigh to God, as he did to his father, and He will draw nigh to you."

"Oh sir, pray for me," were the words which now burst from him, while his whole frame shook with convulsive sobs. Doubtless it was written of him that day in heaven, "Behold, he prayeth." Angels, too, were doubtless rejoicing over that repenting sinner.

A week or two had passed, and I was sitting by the bedside of a dying woman in another part of the district, when the parish doctor entered the room, and, turning to me, said, "What have you done to Mr. I——, of Duke Street?"

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Well, sir, you seem to have had some wonderful influence upon him. When I was first called to see him, I found him the most unmanageable patient I ever encountered. I could do nothing for him. He rejected my advice; he destroyed the medicine I sent him, and almost threatened my life; and now he is as gentle as a lamb, taking all I give him with thankfulness. And do you know he is now likely to recover, which at one time I thought impossible?"

"I have done nothing," I said, "but preach to him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Holy

Ghost has made the word effectual to his conversion from darkness to light. Old things have, I think, passed away, and all things are become new."

"Well, sir," said the doctor, "whatever be the cause, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he is a changed man."

I passed through Duke Street, stopping at Mr. I——'s door to ask for him. No longer the look of terror was depicted upon Mrs. I——'s face. She, too, was beginning to awake from her long sleep, to the realization of eternal things, and soon after found peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. She informed me that her husband was sitting up, and would be happy to see me. I found him rapidly regaining strength and health. God had smitten him in mercy, but had now graciously healed him with that balm of Gilead, the precious blood of Christ—the sovereign remedy for the sin-sick soul; and his bodily health also was restored. And God made even his business to prosper; so that he was enabled after a time to retire to a distant part of the country, where, after devoting himself and his substance to the furtherance of the gospel for a few years, he has recently fallen asleep in Jesus.

Reader, may the same grace triumph in you, and enable *you* to sing,—

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee."

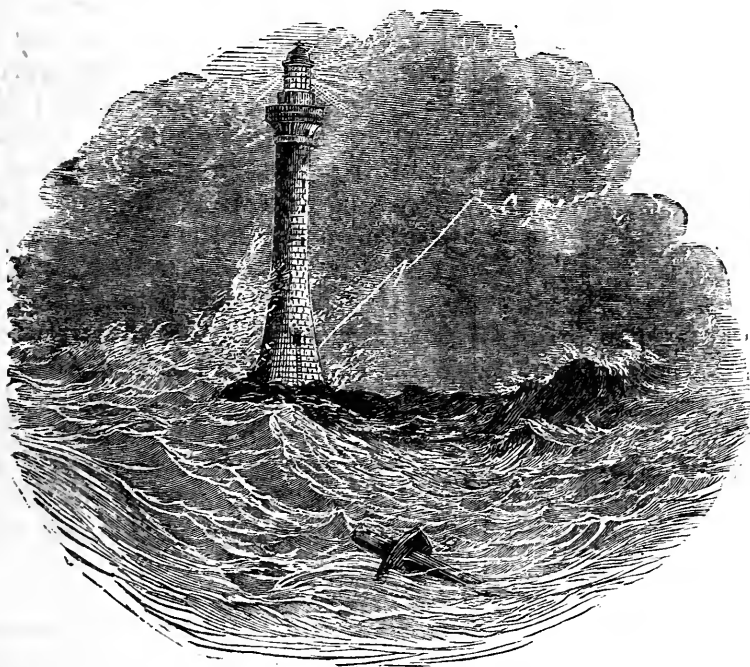
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1872.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.



THIS world is dark; and the soul of man is dark as the world in which he dwells. There is no light in us; nor has there been since that day when sin brought in the night and shut out the sun. When a soul is brought to Christ, the child of darkness is turned into a child of light. George Whitefield once asked a poor Scottish girl whether her heart had been changed. "Either my heart is changed," she replied, "or else the world is changed, for everything looks different to me now from what it once did." So it ever is

when "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

There is but one true light; and that light is He whose name is **THE LIGHT**, the "Sun of righteousness;" who says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

This "true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8); but "it shineth in darkness, and

the darkness comprehendeth it not" (John i. 5). So great is human darkness, that this light has been, and still is, shining in vain to millions and millions of our race. The true light is that which lights us to God and to His kingdom; which shows us the Father, and the way in which a sinner may find Him, and in finding Him find the life of his soul, even eternal life! He who is the true light Himself has said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the light of the world, because He "shows us the Father" (John xiv. 8). He is the revealer of God to a world that has not known Him nor loved Him; and as such He is "the light of life" (John viii. 12); for "in Him is life, and the life is the light of men" (John i. 4).

This light has revealed man, and shown how evil he is, how guilty before God, and in the sight of the pure and awful law which says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4); "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). It is for this that the light is hated by sinners who have sins which they will not give up. They shun a faithful ministry. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John iii. 20). But the light has also revealed God, and shown how good He is; how loving and gracious; ready to receive and bless and save; "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin" (Ex. xxxiv. 6). It has revealed man as lost, and God as saving the lost one; man as sick, and God as healing the sick one; man as cursed, and God as blessing the cursed one; man as condemned, and God as forgiving the condemned one; man as in prison, and God as bringing forth the imprisoned one; man as dead, and God as making him alive; man as wretched, and God as making him blessed; man as filthy, and God as cleansing him; man as afar off, and

God as bringing him nigh; man as an outcast, and God as going after him, taking him by the hand, and making him once more a son, a partaker of His love, and an heir of His own glorious heaven.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). Such has been the revelation of man and God, of sin and grace, of guilt and pardon, through that true light which has come into the world. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John iii. 17). "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14); and "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into this world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9).

In the PERSON of Christ we have the true light. He is God and man; one with God, and one with us; God manifest in the flesh; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh: "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). This is light! This is of itself true and blessed light! Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God: we see in His gracious countenance the very face of God; we hear in His loving words the very voice of God; and we know that all His doings are the very doings of God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John xiv. 10). The love of Jesus is the love of God. The pity of Jesus is the pity of God. The pardon of Jesus is the pardon of God. The voice of Jesus is the voice of God. The touch of Jesus is the touch of God. To touch but the hem of His garment, is to lay hold of Him who "covereth Himself with light as with a garment" (Ps. civ. 2). To speak with Jesus, is to speak with the Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

In the Cross of Jesus the true light shines out gloriously. For that cross is the end of darkness; and respecting him who looks to it, even with the dimmest, feeblest eye, we may say assuredly, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8). For it is written (and the word is sure for ever), "They looked to Him, and were lightened" (Ps. xxxiv. 5); and again, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 22).

The light that comes from that cross is righteous and holy light; yet it is light for the sinner. For there the righteous one was made sin for the unrighteous (2 Cor. v. 21); and there the blessed one bore the curse of the cursed (Gal. iii. 13). There He took the sinner's place, that the sinner might take His. He bore the sinner's sorrow, that the sinner might obtain His joy. He was nailed to that tree as a substitute, and He did there a substitute's work. He who goes to that cross, acknowledging the work which was done there by the divine Sinbearer, comes at once into the possession of all which that work has done. One touch of that cross (though with the faintest and most trembling hand) accomplishes the blessed exchange. One look at that cross, though with but half-opened eye, takes away all the sickness, and brings all the health. "With His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5.) Thus the cross is light, because pardon is there, and peace is there, and the love of God is there. He who misses that light, abideth in darkness.

There are many *false* lights. The world is full of such, even as it is full of false Christs. Many have come, and many are coming still, saying, "I am Christ," or "I am light," and they deceive many. There are many *imitations* of the true light, which yet, after all, are false, and can only deepen the darkness and lead us further astray. No light is true which does not show us the Father; which does not bring

us to God, and draw us out of the darkness of this present evil world. No Christ is the true Christ which does not tell of himself as the one Sinbearer, the one and perfect Saviour, without the help of self or man.

All error is darkness. All false religion is darkness. However like truth the error may be, if it is not the very truth concerning Jesus and His cross, it can give no light to the soul. If it does not tell of sin completely borne by another, and peace made by the blood of the cross, and wrath removed from us by its being transferred to another, it cannot be the glad tidings concerning Him who is the light of the world. False religion, however splendid, however attractive to the natural man, however soothing or sensational, can do nothing for the soul; nor can supply its sore wants, nor bear its heavy burdens, nor heal its bleeding wound. Satan, as an angel of light, will put forth all his efforts to dazzle and delude; but the light that comes from him will only lead further and further astray (2 Cor. xi. 14).

Besides all this, there are many lights of man's kindling, which, though not wholly false, are yet, when taken apart from or instead of the true light of the cross, fitted only to mislead and to destroy. They are not the Sun of righteousness; and if used instead of it, they are perilous. There are beacons which stud our rocky coasts, to guide or to warn the sailor; but they are not the sun. It is well known that in wintry nights of mist and storm, the sea-birds, attracted by the light, rush upon the lighthouse and are dashed in pieces. Perhaps they mistook it for the light of the rising day; and so, mistaking it, they perished. How many of the sons of men, in the wintry gloom of this dark world, mistake the beacon for the sun, and perish!

The cross has lost none of its light during these ages wherein it has been shining. It is still as bright as ever,—bright with the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,—

bright with the fulness of a free and perfect pardon for the chief of sinners, and with the assurance of complete deliverance from wrath to as many as will come. The mere wooden cross is indeed nothing, and the poor imitations of it, paraded as ornaments, are worse than nothing. But that which Paul gloried in (Gal. vi. 14) is everything. The light beaming from it is as true as it is brilliant and abiding.

That which we see in Jesus and His cross, is exactly what the sinner needs for the removal of his darkness. All that he wished to do or could have done to bring light into his soul, he finds there already done for him; so that he has but to stand still and gaze, or rather to sit down under it and enjoy the work of another infinitely better than his own. It is this better work of the divine Substitute that is presented to him instead of his own; and in taking it he finds that it does for him at once all, and much more than all, that his own labours, and prayers, and tears, and good deeds could have wrought, however perfect and pure. This is rest. This is peace. This is light.

"What right has a sinner to be happy here?" said a self-righteous devotee, who imagined that there was religion in being gloomy.—"The same right," it was replied, "that he has to believe that what God has said is true, and that what God has promised is sure."

"But what good works have you done to entitle you to the favour of God?"—"Not one. Not one."

"How, then, do you draw near to Him, or expect Him to receive you?"—"I present to Him that work of another which He has presented to me; I use that work as if it were my own, because He has told me to do so."

"Do you mean to say that you go to God simply as a sinner, and as nothing else, without the plea of one good feeling or work?"—"I do; and I know that in doing so I honour God, by crediting His word as to the work done upon the cross."

"But are you sure that He will receive you?"—"Yes; as sure as that He received the thief upon the cross."

"And on what word of promise do you go?"—"On the word which Jesus spoke here in the days of His flesh: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37); in which word of love to the sinner, Father, Son, and Spirit join; and to which word I add my simple amen; for is it not written, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my word shall not pass away*?' (Matt. xxiv. 35.)

Yes; Christ is still the light of the world—the one true light for the sinner's darkness. All the light of heaven is in Him. All the light of God is in Him. There is fulness enough for the darkest sinner of our dark world. No lost soul hereafter will be able to say, "I came to Jesus, but He would not receive me; I asked, but He would not give; I sought, but He would not be found; I knocked, but He would not open: and I am landed in the blackness of the eternal darkness, because there was not enough of light in the cross for me."

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1872.

“DON'T TRY TO LAUGH IT OFF.”



ONE day, when travelling by rail from Glasgow to Paisley, I was sitting opposite a young man who at times coughed with a short, dry cough. As I have had some medical experience, I at once perceived that the youth's chest was in a delicate state.

“You have a bad cough, my friend,” said I.

“Ah, never mind,” replied he, laughing; “it's only a little cold I have taken.”

“Small beginnings may have serious results,” answered I, in a voice of con-

cern. “I think you might as well consult a doctor about it.”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed he, “it's of no consequence at all.”

About twelve months afterwards, I learned that the poor fellow had died from consumption.

A short, dry cough is a small thing in itself, but it may be the indication of a great danger that is at hand.

And so, many sins and bad habits, which in this world's daily life are counted scarcely worth mentioning, and of no importance at all, are the

indications of an awful and fatal disease of the soul; and unless this disease is cured in time by the Divine Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, it will surely terminate in man's eternal and irrecoverable ruin.

I do not know who you may be, dear reader. Perhaps you have been converted from the darkness of sin to the marvellous light of salvation through Christ; or perhaps you are walking in the way of perdition still. If the latter case should be yours, you are in great danger. But you do not perceive it, as you do not apprehend anything like perdition round about you. You are no murderer, no thief, no profligate. You think there is nothing wrong about you.

But pray observe the *symptoms*.

Perhaps you are in the habit of taking the Lord's name in vain. It is a little word, that holy name, but you every now and then drop it in as an exclamation.

"Nonsense!" you answer. "It is but just a habit. I mean nothing by it."

Ah! but mind, my dear friend, though a small word, it indicates the state of your heart before God. If you loved Him, you could not possibly make His holy name an interjection. *Pray don't try to laugh it off.* It is a serious symptom.

Perhaps, though your conduct before men is irreproachable, you are a prayerless person. Whenever you pray, either in the family circle or at church, your mind reflects upon worldly subjects. You never go into your closet to pray for yourself alone.

"Tut, I'm no hypocrite!" you answer. "I do my duty every day, and that's enough, I should think."

Ah! but your lack of desire to commune with God shows that you are a stranger to Him. *Pray do not try to laugh it off.* If you were His friend, you could not stay away from Him all the day long.

Your friends are well pleased with you. They call you an amiable, nice

fellow. But there are some people whom you don't like. You avoid their presence, because they are too pious for your taste. They like to speak about Jesus, and you don't like that at all,—you prefer speaking about worldly concerns.

"Well, let every one have his own taste," you answer. "We cannot all be of the same stamp."

Ah! but mind, your worldly-minded inclination proves your aversion to heavenly things. It is a dangerous symptom. How can you be fit for heaven if you dislike heavenly things? *Pray don't try to laugh it off.*

You are doing your duty every day, as you think; yet you tremble at the thought of death. You avoid, as much as you can, thinking about your future state after death. The prospect of appearing before God some day soon, terrifies you. Now, be candid, and confess that this is the case with you.

"Well," you answer, "it may be so. But never mind. There are thousands and millions who never think about such gloomy subjects."

True; but what will it avail you if thousands and millions are as miserable as you? Your terror before God proves that your heart is not His property. Oh! I beseech you, *don't try to laugh it off.* It points at the terrible gulf which there is between God and your soul. If you were His, would you not rejoice at the prospect of meeting Him?

Do enter into your condition, and consider the state you are in. Your slight coughs do not alarm you; but those who understand such matters advise you to apply to the Physician as quickly as you can.

There is such a thing as eternal perdition. There is such a place as hell. Don't think that you can reason it away: whether you laugh or weep, facts remain facts. If you are on the way towards destruction, be sure you cannot make it a way towards happiness by merely laughing, or by singing a merry song.

Do not appeal to the testimony of men who are as careless as yourself. They laugh with you, and are merry with you, and with you cry, "Peace, peace, and no danger!" Their number is legion. People of the highest class, of great learning, of extraordinary talents, are among them. You point at them with satisfaction, and ask me with a contemptuous laugh, "Do you want me to believe that all those excellent people should be wrong, and that you alone should be right?—That all those crowds of people should be lost, and you alone saved?"

Ah! my friend, do you not show your utter blindness by the very fact of putting such a question? Did you never read that the only infallible Judge Himself declared that the way that leadeth unto destruction is "broad," and that there be *many* who go in thereat? Mind, crowdedness is the very *mark* of the wrong way. If you want to know the way to perdition, look where the *multitude* goes. Truth is not to be *counted* by numbers,—it must be *weighed* in the scale of God's mind. Whether you put two or a thousand blind people together, it is all the same,—the thousand have no more light than the two. Though the whole world should have assured my young friend in the railway carriage that his cough was of no consequence, yet death would not have come one second later for all that. Though the whole world, and you with them, should laugh at me, you might laugh *me* away, but you will not be able to laugh away the *day of righteous retribution* which is at hand. For it is written, "When they shall say, *Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape*" (1 Thess. v. 3).

Only observe that with every beat of your pulse you are taking a step nearer to your grave. Perhaps already some feeling of indisposition or of increasing debility is the harbinger of your approaching decay. Perhaps many of your friends or acquaintances, younger than you, stronger than you,

are lying already now in the deep, dark pit of death. They used to laugh as you are laughing now. But what has become of their careless hilarity? Do they laugh now? Alas! if they to their last moment continued without a Saviour, be sure that their laughing has turned into weeping, and their merriment into gnashing of teeth.

Now, don't think I am speaking to you in this way only to frighten you. When addressing my young friend in the railway carriage about his cough, my intention was not merely to alarm him, but to drive him to the physicians, that he might be cured. I have no objection, in itself, to your laughing. I do not at all grudge you a cheerful disposition of mind; but I object to your untimely want of rational sobriety of mind. For there are laughing people to whom the Lord says, "Woe unto you that laugh *now*! for ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke vi. 25).

God wants you to rejoice, but at the right time, from the right cause, in the right spirit. As it is written, "*Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee*" (Deut. xxvi. 11). But rejoicing at the moment one is in danger, uncertain of one's salvation, or even most assuredly walking towards eternal destruction—such a rejoicing is foolish, reckless, suicidal.

If there were no physician for your disease, surely I should not speak to you in this way; it would be of no use. But, God be praised! there is a Physician for you, and one as willing as He is mighty to cure you. Now hasten to Him at once, and you may indeed be glad. *He* will make you rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

JESUS CHRIST is His name—the Son of the living God, and the only Redeemer of lost sinners. Through Him God has most emphatically evinced that He has no delight in your distress, but wants you to be happy and rejoicing. Therefore He sent down the Son of His love to this fallen world

of ours, that *He* should take all our sin and misery upon Himself, in order that there should be a sure foundation for our peace and gladness. Look at His Cross. There He suffered, in order that we should not suffer. Look at Gethsemane. There He wept, in order that we should have fulness of joy. He has atoned for our sin in His precious body. He has suffered our penalty. He has tasted the bitterness of our death and the woe of our curse. Out of His precious wounds flows the balm that only can cure our hopeless malady. Oh, what a love of God towards the leprous sinners who trampled His holy commandments under foot, and even *could laugh while doing so!*

Don't think this may give you an occasion to continue laughing in your irrational carelessness. If you don't believe that Jesus suffered all that for sinners, and if you, in that faith, don't go to Him, to give up your heart to Him, and to abhor the sins that caused Him to die, you surely will perish with a perdition equal to the boundless recklessness with which you have neglected so great a salvation. The medicine, indeed, is given; but what will it avail you if you do not take it? Or what use will it be to you, if you continue doing all that is promoting your disease, and contradictory to the advice, yea, the entreaties, of that loving Physician?

Oh! again and again I beseech you, poor, wandering, careless sinner, DON'T TRY TO LAUGH IT OFF! Only remem-

ber that what you are joking about is such a terrible evil, that the Son of the living God Himself suffered His heart's blood to flow, His body to be bruised, and His soul to be poured out unto death, to save you from it.

Oh! take heed that your laugh do not turn into the cry of despondency, "Mountains, fall upon me! hills, cover me!" Rather hasten to take your place among those to whom it is said, "*Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven*" (Luke, vi. 23).

Reader, it may be late with you, but it is not yet too late. *It is yet possible for you to be saved.*—"Now,"—even now while you read this tract,—"*now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Don't lay me in the churchyard!" said a wicked man, dying in his wickedness. He then named a lonely spot, distant from the town, where he desired to be buried. "Why do you wish to be buried there?" asked his friend. He replied, in the darkness of despair, "It is that I may perhaps be forgotten in the judgment day!" O reader! godly or ungodly, an awful certainty is before us,—"*Once to die,*" "*after this the judgment.*" "*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal*" (Matt. xxv. 46). *Don't try to laugh it off.*

(Dublin Tract Society.)

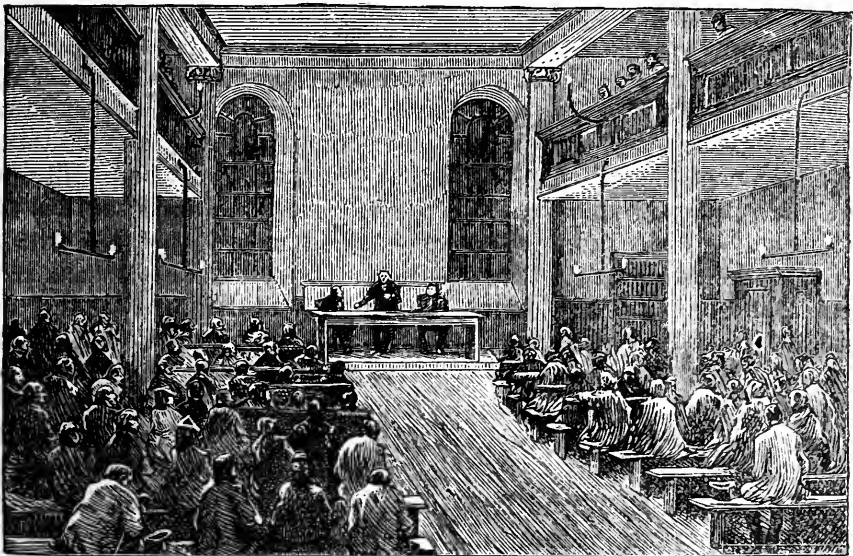
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1872.

CARRUBBER'S CLOSE MISSION.



Whitefield Chapel.

IN the High Street of Edinburgh, about a hundred yards below the Tron Church, Carrubber's Close slopes downward to the north. At the foot stands, or rather stood, "Whitefield Chapel." Erected as a theatre in 1736 by Allan Ramsay, the Scottish poet, the place has had a strange history. Cock-fighting, boxing, singing, dancing, have been among its various uses during the last and the present centuries. George Whitefield seems to have preached in it; hence, probably, its name. Edward Irving many times did so, and Dr. M'Crie, the biographer of John Knox. Previously to 1858, it was a meeting-place of a

club of atheists. Standing, as it did, in the track of one of the projected new streets which are slicing "Old Edinburgh" into strips, the chapel is now being swept away. Its last days have been among its best. It will be long remembered as the humble headquarters of the "Carrubber's Close Mission."

A visitation of the neighbourhood in 1856 led the Sabbath School Teachers' Union to fresh efforts for the young. Under the direction of Mr. James Gall, jun., through whose hereditary zeal for that good cause the Union had been founded some twenty years before, Whitefield Chapel was leased

for five years. On obtaining the key, Mr. Gall and three other friends met there on Sabbath morning, 30th May 1858. Having coaxed together a handful of young ragamuffins from the close, they began a Sabbath school. It was uphill work, tormented as they were for a while by big boys from without. Undaunted, they persevered. Joined by Mr. Alexander Jenkinson, fresh life and many new labourers were imparted to the mission. An institute was formed, adapted, by various Christian ingenuities, to attract grown lads and girls as well as children. After a first year of hopeful progress, a second year began with thirty labourers and a Sabbath school of 280. A prayer meeting was now opened for all willing to come, held from the High Street, where six labourers, in turn, preached each meeting night in succession at the head of the close. The monthly prayer meeting became weekly, then every night. For a month, the only token was the large and steady attendance. But soon a change became apparent. There was the troubled look, the silent tear; and men would throw themselves on their knees, "as if determined to pray." There was "a sound of rain."

On the evening of 14th October 1859, after each one present had been urged that night to decide for Christ, further counsel was offered to any who might remain. Three did so—an old man, a young man, and a young woman. From this night onward, for several years, Whitefield Chapel, with the other meeting-rooms now connected with it, saw many a scene of blessing. It became a place of weeping for sin. For many months the work of God was with power. Many believed, both men and women, and even children. The nightly meeting in the chapel (of which our illustration gives an interior view) at this memorable time is thus described by a stranger:

"It was past eight o'clock, one dark, wet evening in November. Opposite the entrance of a steep close,

we were stopped by a gathering of listeners to an earnest street-preacher. Hovering round, were three or four lads, who, as they offered a hand-bill to loiterers, quietly said, 'Please go to the meeting at the foot of the close.'

"I got a hand-bill, and went down the close to the chapel. The body of the hall was filled with school-forms, which might seat 220 or 250 persons; a narrow gallery would hold sixty more.

"On a platform, at the upper end of the chapel, behind a rough deal table, were ranged five or six chairs. The gentleman who had originated the mission occupied the centre seat, while three or four sat at his side.

"Right before the table, leaning on a stick even while he sits on the form, is an old, decrepit man, thin and shrivelled, his eyes watery. He was a waiter in one of our most bustling hotels, and seems to have run about till he can now only creep. Yonder sit two strong, toil-stained men, the soil of the anvil still on them. Near them, a mother with a baby at her breast and a little boy close to her—the key of her house hangs on her finger. In a recess to the left of the platform sit two girls, evidently outcasts. The middle seats were filled with men and women, some children, and a few well-dressed people. Near the entrance are forms filled with work-girls who could not come sooner. Similar knots of work-lads come in sight, and get absorbed in the meeting. Besides these, sprinkled over the seats, are a number of workers in the mission.

"At half-past eight the prayer meeting begins. There is nothing remarkable in the service, except the earnest stillness, and the scraps of paper handed up with requests for prayer.

"There is no regular address. A few verses are read, and a few remarks made, but nothing of an exciting nature. At half-past nine the prayer meeting closes. Any who wish special instruction are invited to stay. And how many anxious inquirers are there left in the room? There must be at least *forty* or *forty-five*.

"That old, tottering waiter has

stayed; yon workmen have stayed; some women, eight or ten lads and boys, and some fifteen or twenty girls from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. An elder of one of our churches is speaking to the two poor girls we noticed before. Gradually he remembers the face of one of them. She was once his Sabbath scholar.

"Not above eight or ten will venture to speak to these inquirers; so two, three, or four are assigned to each, and a more solemn scene begins. The chairman turns to the Bible, and reads the promise, 'They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and mourn.' (Zech. xii. 10.) They all kneel, and solemnly the promise is presented to God, and the blessing sought. After three minutes, the chairman says, 'Now, let each one, on his knees, silently pray for himself.' All is hushed to a deeper stillness. After a few audible sentences more, they rise, and each teacher turns to those who profess to be anxious to be saved, and seeks to direct them. The spectacle of so many saying by their actions, 'What must I do to be saved?' makes one feel indeed that 'God is in this place.'

"After an hour, the chairman raises a psalm. A short prayer, and the service is announced as over."

So, month after month, the work went on. "This and that man was born there." The young converts, filled with life and love, everywhere sought to "teach others also." Among many of the workshops and workrooms of Edinburgh it could no longer be scoffed at, but became a manifest fact, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The drunkard, the swearer, the unclean, were found gathered in the fellowship of Christ, "clothed, and in their right mind." To the villages round Edinburgh, many of those earnest working men, who toiled sixty hours a week for bread, went, with the joy of the Lord for their strength, night after night proclaiming to others "what a Saviour they had

found." Milk-girls, who had been brought to Christ, used their opportunities as missionaries to the household servants. The chapel became too strait for the Sabbath evening meetings. The old Theatre Royal, purchased by Government as a site for the new Post Office, and then standing empty, was procured. From 29th April to 22d July 1860, that building saw sights it had never seen before. "Tell me," said a young man who one night wandered into it, "what is all this praying for? Is it a sham, or is it in earnest?" "It is in earnest," was the reply of one who thereafter conversed with him. They both knelt down and prayed; and on rising, the young man shook hands, evidently much impressed, and promised to return.

The next removal of the Sabbath evening meeting was to the New Assembly Hall. There it has ever since been continued, as originally in Carrubber's Close, where also a Sabbath evening meeting has always been kept up. During the twelve years that have passed since then, there is cause to believe that the Assembly Hall has proved a Bethel to thousands. Many a wayfarer, turning in thither, has received a blessing through its simple gospel services; and most eminently has it manifested the reality and power of PRAYER. Not a night passes without request in behalf of a prodigal son, a drunken husband, an ungodly father, or some other case where vain is the help of man. One link to Carrubber's Close Mission remains unbroken in the active care of Alexander Jenkinson, whose single-eyed fidelity is as widely known as is the work in which he has so long and so nobly laboured.

In Carrubber's Close the light has always been kept burning. A meeting for prayer, and for the holding forth of Christ, was held every night in Whitefield Chapel from 23d August 1859, until the keys were sorrowfully given up on 29th June 1872. The

meetings now continue in the "Drawing-Room," another hall in the close. Once every quarter there is a kind of family gathering of the members, who have always had the greatest freedom of action, and are held together far less by rules than by mutual confidence and love. Most touching it was, at those happy meetings, to hear one after another of those brave workers tell how Jesus sought the lost sheep "until He found it." "Ten were cleansed," and many more than one return to give thanks. And no meeting was more touching than the farewell, held on Saturday evening, 29th June 1872. The last words heard in Whitefield Chapel were Revelation xxii. 17, read by Mr. Gall, who, fourteen years before, had been honoured to plant this goodly tree, "WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

"Whitefield Chapel" is now, or soon will be, no more. Often literally a den of thieves, in its last days it became truly a house of prayer. Many, in time to come, will look over the North Bridge wall to the spot where it stood, and remember it as the birth-place of souls. For years it was, as it were, a kind of house of call for the spiritually wounded, who knew that there the love of God in Christ was to be heard of every night in the year. A poor sailor, awakened at the meeting, went to sea with a heavy heart. On his ship returning to port, after sailing round the world, he again, still without peace, repaired to the chapel. There, through words spoken about Jesus, he at last found rest. Many tracts might be filled with like

stories of Carrubber's Close. But, reader, the most solemn story for us all is that, in that old hall, many human souls, by God's blessing, *were led to Jesus Christ*. Many will spend their eternity in heaven, who, in the light of Scripture, but for what they heard there would have spent it in hell. *Conversion means turning*, and turning is a personal matter. In *your* soul's history, has there ever been a *turning*? Perhaps what you now read re-awakens a flash of conviction which once pierced you in that very meeting—still resisted. Remember, "I have called, and *ye refused*." (Prov. i. 24.)

Reader! three words before we part:—

1. "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

2. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." (Eccles. xi. 6.)

3. "Tell me," said the young man, "what is all this praying for? Is it a sham, or is it in earnest?" Dear reader, are you asking this question? See in this story of grace, if you be yet out of Christ, good reason why *you* should be in earnest. Do you *believe* that, if you die out of Christ, your portion will be an eternal hell? If you do, is there a moment to lose? Resist not the Holy Spirit any longer. "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.)

"O may we stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled,
And hear the Judge pronounce our name,
With blessings on our head!"

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1873.

"IS IT I?"



IN ancient times, some Egyptian soldiers had taken possession of a province belonging to the Roman empire. An ambassador was sent from Rome to the king of Egypt, to require their immediate removal. The king hesitated, and attempted to put off the demand; when the Roman drew a ring around him on the sand where they were standing, and sternly told him that if he crossed that line without first commanding the removal of his troops, he should thereby declare himself the enemy of the Roman people, and an army should be sent to destroy his kingdom.

Are there not many of our readers who may well, by this story, be warned of their own danger? Sinners by nature, and by actual transgression, we are all "guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19), "children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3); for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). Christ has died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. (1 Pet. iii. 18.) All who have received and rested upon him alone for salvation,

are **SAVED**. All who have not, up to this hour, are **LOST**, — rebels alike against the law and the love of God. And reader, are you yet among the rebels? Year after year, month after month, every sermon you have heard, every scripture, every tract you have read, has been a messenger from the King, beseeching you, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. v. 20.) Are you yet unreconciled? Then does not this tract, with the offer of salvation which it brings, draw, as it were, a line of love across the broad road down which you are walking? It says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." (Heb. iii. 15.) And you cannot cross that line,—you cannot put off the ambassador,—you cannot refuse that offer,—without once more declaring yourself an enemy, and trampling the blood of Christ under foot. What shall the end be? Will you not think of it?

We plead not merely with the openly ungodly. In this land of Christian profession, are there not deceivers, and self-deceivers, in thousands? It is well for us all to make sure work, lest we die with a lie in our right hand.

"Verily I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 21, 22.) Doubtless Judas must have sometimes been suspected, yet the warning is taken by each to his own heart. They ask not, *Lord, is it Judas?* but, *Lord, is it I?*

There are other characters besides Judas held up to us in Scripture for our warning, concerning whom it may be well for us to ask, Lord, is it I? Within our brief space, let us think of him, and of only two others. May the Holy Spirit hold them as a lamp to our consciences. For is there not cause to fear, in those days of the general profession among us, not merely of Christian doctrine, but of the highest Christian experience, that many talk of the narrow way who have never entered at the strait gate. When we think how close an imi-

tation Satan can make of a work of grace in the soul, by means of Bible knowledge, combined with some knowledge of human nature, and some little tact in applying them the one to the other,—and when we see with how many the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful,—surely it is well for us to be examining ourselves, whether we be in the faith.

I. JUDAS.—Let us look at so much of the character of Judas as represents those who, after having had some thought about their souls, and made some profession, deliberately part with Christ for the sake of the world.

It is not unlikely that Judas had at first some measure of true conviction. There is no evidence that the love of money was the motive which made him at the first join himself to the disciples. But whatever began his profession of Christ, it is too plain that the love of money carried it on, and that upon this he made shipwreck at last.

Judas had heard, by the hearing of the ear, of the difference between light and darkness. He had been the witness to many conversions, and doubtless had more opportunity than any child of perdition ever had, of beholding the beauty of holiness, in the secret life of the Saviour. Yet not only temptation sought *him*, but *he* sought temptation. He offered himself to the fearful bargain: "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And how fearful the doom! As if anticipating the judgment, Jesus said, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Dear reader, what say you to this? Though not in the company of Christ, perhaps you have been much in the company of Christians. Perhaps, like Judas, you have seen many conversions, so that you *know* that if any man be

in Christ, he is a new creature. Perhaps your mind has been stored with Bible truth from your childhood, and you know well what is meant by betraying Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Have you ever been brought deliberately to choose whether you would part with some sin, some secret lust, some dishonest practice in trade, or part with your hope for eternity? And what has your decision been? There have been men who, to save parting with a shilling, have been known to tell a deliberate lie. Fearful bargain!

“Lord, is it I?”

II. FELIX.—“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” (Acts xxiv. 25.)

Another character. “Go thy way for this time.” Reader! do you answer to the likeness? There are probably few who do not, *excepting those* who have truly given themselves to Christ.

Apart from saving fruit, a great result of the abundant teaching of our day is, that the natural conscience is enlightened with Bible truth, and with the authority of God over the sinner. And so when Christ, as it were, comes to the door, conscience recognises the knock. It knows well what conversion means, though itself a stranger to the saving change. It will not be bribed to silence, and yet it dare not say, “Go away; I will not let thee in.” But the answer is given, with mingled enmity and fear, “Go thy way for this time.” Many, doubtless, there are, who have long been carrying about with them the thorns of conviction, vainly striving to deaden the wound with this soul-destroying delusion.

And who is it that speaks, and to whom is it spoken? It is a worm of the dust contending with its Maker. It is guilt trying to get rid of grace. It is a child of wrath sending away the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death. It is a brand in

the burning saying to the almighty hand that is offering to pluck it out, “When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

Rebel sinner! your God and King, to whom you belong, and in whose power you are, whether you will or no, comes to you even now, commanding you to be reconciled. Will you treat him as if he were your servant, telling him to wait till it be convenient, and then you will listen to what he has to say? Will you put him off with a promise? Will a father suffer himself so to be mocked, if a child answers, when called upon to cease from some act of disobedience, “To-morrow I will cease from disobeying you”? Remember, the *intention* to submit, even if it were honest, is not *submission*. Whatever your sorrow, your tears, your promises, you are an enemy to God *up to the moment* of your casting yourself, as a lost and hell-deserving sinner, on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Oh wondrous grace, that God hath so joined our duty and our blessedness together! Oh wondrous, mysterious grace, that it should be a CRIME in a sinner to be LOST! For the last act on earth of a lost soul is a *refusing to accept God's unspeakable gift*.

And yet, dear reader, there *is* such a thing as being given over to a reprobate mind. Tempt God no longer. Shall not the words of Felix be a warning?

“Lord, is it I?”

III. AGRIPPA.—“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” (Acts xxvi. 28.)

Reader! are you *almost persuaded*? Perhaps you can remember when first your peace was broken,—the word came home, brought, perhaps, by some heavy providence. Your earthly idol was taken from you, and you felt you were without a portion, without God in the world. You saw, in the light of an eternal world, that to be carnally-minded is death. You saw the handwriting, in letters of fire,

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

And you have had many sleepings and wakings since then. You try sometimes to enjoy the vanities that were once your delight; but the arrow is rankling in your soul. You can never have the same heart for worldly joys again.

Perhaps you are even further advanced. You have turned your back on the world, and the world may have turned its back on *you*. You have as many slights and scorns to bear as if you were a decided and happy Christian. You seek to be faithful in duty, and you are not forgetful of either the public or private means of grace. Perhaps he who seeth in secret has even heard from you the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And yet, for all this, you may be *almost* persuaded, and *nothing more*. True it may be, that you are not far from the kingdom of God. But why do you linger? Why, like the Ethiopian, go mourning with the Bible before you, when, like that same Ethiopian, you might be going on your way rejoicing? Search and see that, on the one hand, the cause do not lie in some sin still hid in your heart, and which you know you must part with, if you are to give yourself up to the Lord. And see, on the other, that you be not looking in a wrong direction for pardon and peace. Remember the words of the African chief, "I tried to change my own heart, but it grew worse and worse, and *in despair I came to Christ*, pleaded the promises, and obtained relief." Remember it is written, not "this man receiveth *saints*," but "this man receiveth **SINNERS**."

Friend, almost persuaded! Remember, to be *almost saved* is to be *altogether lost*.

"Lord, is it I?"

Reader, among these characters, have you recognised your own? And now, are you about to go your way, and straightway to forget what manner of person you are? If a thought of your danger has flashed upon your soul, beware how you stifle it. Beware lest this prove your deeper condemnation, that the light has come, not only into the world, but into your conscience, and you have loved the darkness rather than the light, because your deeds were evil. "Remember Lot's wife." Is your heart in some measure melted because of sin? *One backward look* may turn it again into stone. "Twice dead" is a fearful word. If you are anxious, it is not likely that you will long remain so. You will either go forward or backward—either come to Christ and be saved, or drawback unto perdition. Decide now, else Satan will soon decide for you.

Out of the old year, into a new, the King's message has followed you. To cross that line still careless, prayerless, Christless, is once more to proclaim that you are still for war. If you turn not, what shall the end be? *The end of these things is death*. Dear fellow-sinner, count it not unkindness while again we ask, *Will you not think of it?* "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.)

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1873.

‘DOING NO HARM TO ANYBODY.’



ONE morning a message was brought to my house that a woman, whom we shall call Marion, had been taken seriously ill, and was very anxious to see me. I knew Marion by reputation perfectly well, and guessed the motive which had led her to send for me. Her moral character was outwardly irreproachable—that is to say, she was honest, sober, civil, and industrious. But many years before, she had fallen out of the habit of attending any place of worship; she had ceased, in consequence, to be in communion with any church; and, so far as one could judge by her conduct, she had completely lost all sense of religion. The existence of Christianity in the world had, in fact, come to have as little practical interest for her as a contest for the Presidency of the United States.

Such persons, however, never like to die without some religious ceremony. There are people who, when their end approaches, send for the priest, that

they may get a *viaticum*—something to sustain them in the journey which they are about to commence. But it is also far commoner than many are aware of for nominal Protestants who have lived in utter neglect of ordinances, to send at the last for the minister, that they may have the comfort of experiencing, in dying, the sacramental efficacy, as they think, of his prayers. How many there are who, even on a deathbed, evade every kind effort to bring home to them the truth about sin and about Christ, and yet who will eagerly ask, ‘*Give us a prayer!*’ I had no doubt that this idea was in Marion’s mind, and I found, on visiting her, that I was not mistaken.

After a few kindly inquiries about her illness, I gently asked her if she had any fear that it might prove fatal. She said ‘Yes,’—that, in fact, she had no doubt she was dying. ‘Then,’ said I, ‘you have, of course, been seriously thinking about what is beyond death. You know that after death comes the judgment. May I ask what are your prospects for another world? What are you going to say for yourself when you are called upon to give in your account?’

‘Well, sir,’ said she, with perfect composure and readiness, ‘*I have never done any harm to anybody.*’

‘You mean that this is what you will answer when charged with being a sinner at the bar of God? and your expectation is, that because you have never done any harm to anybody, you will not only not be condemned, but you will be permitted to enter into a far happier life than you have ever known here?’

She was silent. It was evident that, as the result of such thinking as she had given to the subject, this was the only notion of the way of salvation which she had been able to reach. And her answer did not surprise me. I had heard it, in like cases, many times before. Indeed, scarcely anything seems more alarming than the wide prevalence of the very delusion

to which this poor woman gave expression. It implies belief in a sort of justification by works, but it is a peculiarly subtle form of that error. Its basis is this, that one ought to be punished only for injuries inflicted on *others*. As for injuries done to *one’s self*, that is, so to speak, one’s own look-out. Every man should be left free to do what he likes with his own. And the principle, when applied, carries, it will be seen, such conclusions with it as these: that even drunkenness and personal Sabbath-breaking are small offences, if we are able to indulge them without wronging our neighbours.

But to return to the case in hand.

‘So,’ said I, after a pause, ‘you have never done any harm to anybody, Marion?’

‘No, sir.’

‘It is a great thing to say. The attribute of harmlessness is one of those which are specially ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ. *He* was “holy, harmless, undefiled.” It is well if you are like Him in that respect. But do you mean that you have never done any harm either to God or man?’

‘I was thinking only of man, sir.’

‘Ah! but God’s law speaks of duties which we owe to both, and at the judgment you will be asked how you discharged them all. To love God with all the heart is the first and the great commandment; and nothing will excuse our neglecting it.’

‘But I *do* love God, sir; and I am sure I never wished to do Him any harm.’

‘Indeed, I daresay you did not mean to do God any harm; but just let us think how you have been treating him these many years, and see whether He has had any cause to suppose that you loved him. There are seven days in the week;—six of them He gave you to do your work in, and only one He kept to himself, requiring you to keep it holy. Do you think you did him no injury when you took His day and used it for your own purposes? Then, in this street where

you live, there are many houses, but there is one among them which is known as God's House—do you think it showed love to Him that you never entered it? I see, too, among the books on the shelf there, a book which God himself wrote for your benefit,—perhaps you often read it, I don't know; but if you did not, do you imagine He can be pleased with your neglect? Above all, God sent his Son into the world to die, the just for the unjust,—for the very purpose of saving sinners, who must all otherwise have perished (John iii. 16). Now, if you have been practically saying that all this was needless, and that *you* could have done quite well without it,—if you have never given heed to the gospel—never taken any interest in it—never embraced it,—do you not see that you have injured God in the manner most fitted to dishonour and to grieve Him? You have treated his pity with indifference, and cast contempt upon the most precious outgoings of his grace. Don't tell me that you love God, when you have so despised all these things by which he has made himself known to us. Don't imagine that you have done Him no harm, when you have broken his Sabbaths, forsaken his sanctuary, neglected his word, and taken no interest in his gospel.'

Marion made no reply to all this; and I could not tell whether she had taken it in or not. I went on, however.

'But you will say, perhaps, that at least you have been doing no harm to any of your neighbours?'

She brightened up at this, and gave a sign of assent. There was still one plank, at any rate, remaining to cling to. She was evidently quite sure that her life on this side had been innocent.

'Well,' I said, 'let us try your conduct by your own standard. I quite believe that you have never taken away, or tried to take away, your neighbour's property, or his good name, or his comfort. On the contrary, I have reason to believe that

you have done many kindly offices to all around you. But, of course, your *example* has gone for something. You know we are like a flock of sheep. If one breaks through a hedge, the others are likely to follow; and just so, let one head of the house, in a street or stair, live without taking anything to do with religion, and she is sure to have imitators. Tell me this, then: would you like me, after you are gone, to advise your grown-up daughters, who have now families of their own, to observe how you lived here, and to walk in all respects in your footsteps?'

A shadow of pain passed over the poor woman's face as I put the question, and she answered quickly,—

'They are doing it already, sir.'

'You mean that the Sabbath is a common day to them, and that they are never seen in the house of God, and take no interest in religion?'

'Yes.'

'And are you satisfied with that?'

'No.'

'But perhaps *you* had nothing to do with their remaining thus among the godless?'

'I had. It was how I brought them up.'

'Then you must see what an untrustworthy foundation you have been building your dying hopes upon. Instead of never having done any harm to anybody, you have done those dearest to you an injury which may cost them the loss of their souls.'

When I had said this, Marion, for the first time in her life probably, became seriously alarmed about the character and consequences of her past life. And now, like one cast suddenly out of a wreck into the sea, she flung about in search of something new to which she could cling, and by means of which she might be preserved from being 'lost.'

I thereupon preached *repentance* to her, trying to make her see her sin in all its enormity and inexcusableness. It is quite true that we are authorized

to preach a free gospel even to the guiltiest, and that at the very last there may be a real turning to God. But one who has lived all his days under the gospel, and has never till his dying hour given heed to it, has been guilty of awful sin. And one has good cause to suspect the profession of a deathbed faith if it be not accompanied by a bitter repentance.

‘Well,’ I said, ‘it would be unfaithful in me to allow you to think lightly of the manner in which you have been living. It was a most reasonable service which God demanded of you. Your conscience must have told you as much; and it is only right that you should now look your sin fairly in the face, and ask yourself the plain question, if your damnation would not be just? In one respect you have been worse even than many of the heathen. They are often to be found in the temples of their gods, and cruel sufferings are often cheerfully borne by them, in the hope of thereby securing an idol’s favour; while you, by your own admission, have been living here for years without recognising the true God either in one way or another. Surely such conduct is most shameful and wicked; and if you escape the punishment which it deserves, it must be on some other ground than that *you never did any harm to anybody.*’

‘I see it all,’ she replied, weeping bitterly; ‘I have been a great sinner.’

‘But are you sorry for your sin? Do you repent of it?’

‘I do,’ she cried; ‘oh, what will become of me!’

‘This is a faithful saying,’ I answered, ‘and worthy of all acceptance,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,’ even the chief. (1 Tim. i. 15.)

And I proceeded to tell the poor woman that there was hope even for her; and that although God will save no one, however apparently harmless he may be, who refuses to receive Jesus Christ and to rest upon Him, there is no sinner, however many or great his sins are, who will be lost, if he is willing to take salvation on the terms of the gospel. (John xiv. 6.)

Marion shortly after died; and little as I knew her, I am not without hope that she is now with the Lord. But let the reader, who has thus had her case brought under his notice, ask himself, What plea *he* means to employ when he stands before God in the judgment? It is absolutely certain that there are thousands in this Christian country whose only ground of hope is this, that (as they put it), ‘*they have never done any harm to anybody;*’ and if ever there was a lie of Satan put into people’s mouths with a view to their eternal undoing, **THIS IS ONE.** It is a falsehood in itself; but even although it were true of a man’s standing toward others, it could never be anything for a sinner but a refuge of lies. For we need to be not merely *harmless*, but **RIGHTEOUS**; and we can be that only when we have personally taken Jesus Christ as our Substitute, our Surety, our ‘Advocate with the Father.’ Then, and then only, are we sure of acceptance; for God ‘hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ (2 Cor. v. 21.)

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1873.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.



MUNGO PARK IN THE DESERT.

(See page 4.)

VERY beautiful indeed was the pastoral farm of S——. Robert N——, its tenant, had been a prosperous man, his flocks and herds had greatly increased, and of late years he had gathered large gains; but he was as ungrateful for the bounties of Providence as he was insensible to the beauties of nature. He saw the hand of God in neither; and though he would have been shocked had he been called an atheist, yet practically he was so, for he lived 'without God in the world'—the world, in the shape of self, being really his god. The goodness of God in placing him amid scenes so fair and circumstances so happy had no effect on him. Much around him he heeded not at all; much he regarded as a mere matter of course; and more as the due reward of what he rated very highly—his own skill and industry. God, however, had spoken to him in language yet more gracious than that of nature and providence. 'The big ha' Bible' lay on his shelf, and with more or less regularity he attended a church in which the gospel was faithfully proclaimed.

But the message of mercy in his case fell on listless ears, and found no place in a heart that was wholly engrossed, even during the most tender and appealing proclamations of divine love, with questions of 'buying and selling, and getting gain.' And so the years went on, and the time came when he was gathered to his fathers; but the utter insensibility to divine things which had characterized him throughout life, continued even amidst the pains of dissolution. He died while giving directions as to how his flocks were to be cared for during the coming winter—a winter whose many snows lay deep and white on his grave.

The case of the worldly-minded farmer of S—— is, we fear, no solitary one. To how many, who either think not of God at all, or cherish hard thoughts concerning Him, is it said, and as yet said in vain, 'Behold the goodness of God!' Reader, are you yet one of these? Think for a few moments of some of the ways wherein God, by that goodness, is calling upon men everywhere to repent.

1. *His goodness in the gift of His Son.*—It is said that the famous Queen Elizabeth gave her favourite Essex a ring, with the assurance that if at any time he were in trouble, and to send to her that ring, she would hasten to his deliverance. The ring, in itself considered, was of little value, though it was made of the most precious metal, and sparkled with jewels; but how much it implied! It implied that the heart of his sovereign was wholly his, and that all the mighty power of England was pledged to his safety. But God has bestowed on us a gift infinitely precious in itself, and implying—oh, how much! He has given us His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. 'We are redeemed, not with such corruptible things as silver or gold, but the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.' 'Herein indeed is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitia-

tion for our sins.' Shall we not then say, 'Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift;' and in view of it exclaim, Truly 'God is love'?

'Oh, how could heavenly grace for man have such regard,
And all for love, and nothing for reward?'

2. *His goodness in the law which He has given us.*—We by nature think the law of God exceedingly severe, and are ready to say of it, 'This is an hard saying, who can hear it?' God, we imagine, is, like Pharaoh of old, a hard taskmaster. But the love of God is seen as really, though not so conspicuously, in the law as in the gospel. 'Stolen waters are sweet,' it is said, 'bread eaten in secret is pleasant;' but the pleasures of sin, however much they may be enjoyed, are only for a season, and speedily bring a terrible revenge. We read in Eastern story of a prophet who had a vast and weird power over his many followers, and who gave forth his utterances veiled in robes of exceeding brightness. His admirers often wished him to remove the veil, so that they might see the living features. At last he did so; and what a shock they experienced, when, instead of celestial beauty, they beheld the most ghastly deformity! And so sin may seem fair outwardly, but when stripped of its false colours it stands forth a hideous and death-spreading monster; whereas God's law is not only beautiful in the eyes of perfect intelligences, but the more it is considered and put to the test experimentally by ourselves, is it seen to be holy, and just, and good—a law in the keeping of which there is a great reward. 'Ring out the old, ring in the new,' sings the poet; but the new world which forms the object of the the saint's desire, is a world 'wherein dwelleth righteousness'—one in which God's law is loyally obeyed, and is gratefully acknowledged to show the greatness of His goodness, as well as the unsearchableness of His wisdom.

3. *His goodness in His willingness to forgive.* 'Revenge is sweet' to the unregenerate heart of man. How difficult

for him from the heart to forgive even once a real or imagined injury! A gentleman on board a vessel was inflicting severe punishment on his servant for a trifling offence. On being remonstrated with, he said, '*I never forgive.*' 'Then I hope you never offend,' was the reply. But our God is plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive even to the uttermost. 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 'The blood of Christ Jesus, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin.' When guilt, then, presses heavily upon us, and we cry, 'What shall we do to be saved?' let us behold the goodness of God in the full and free forgiveness which He is able and ready to bestow, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom forgiveness comes, and we shall be saved. For 'God is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.'

4. *His goodness in the trials which He sends.*—We keenly shrink from trial, and when it comes we murmur. We are slow indeed to see mercy in affliction, But 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' He tries us that He may lead us to repentance; and, after we have come, not for His pleasure, but for our profit. 'There it is,' said a young man to a companion, pointing to a broken arm, from which he had suffered severely; 'there it is, and I will have reason to thank God for it through all eternity; for before this accident, as men call it, came to me, I was a careless wicked creature, rushing downward to destruction; but lying on this bed of suffering I have had time to think, and I have seen myself to be a poor sinner, and Christ to be a precious Saviour, and by grace I can say, He is mine.' And so God in His great mercy sends trial, and multitudes have had reason to say, It was good for me that I was afflicted.

5. *His goodness in the bright and happy world which He has prepared for His*

people.—'In my Father's house are many mansions,—I go to prepare a place for you,' said our Divine Redeemer. We are not to let our hearts be troubled. 'And *do* you really think there is a world to come?' said a poor God-forgetting man to me on his death-bed. I was startled with his question, and moved by his earnestness; such a light came from those hollow eyes, such an agony was in that hollow voice, as I shall not soon forget. I said that all my pleadings and prayers were quite unnecessary if there was no future state; that I spake as I believed, and because I believed. 'Well,' he continued, 'but many say there is no such place.' 'And when and where do they say *that*?' I inquired. 'Oh, in the public-house, and over their drink; but I think when they come to be in my condition, they will be as terrified as I now am.' 'Yes,' I said, 'sometimes men not only live fools, but die as the fool dieth; but often there is a terrible awakening.' And I preached, as simply, earnestly, and affectionately as I could to the poor man in his dying agony, Him who has said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' And oh, how great the joy, how blessed the prospects, of those in whom Christ is formed the hope of glory! They can say, 'We know, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' And as we think of the exceeding, even the eternal weight of glory which God hath laid up for them that love Him, we may well, with adoring gratitude, exclaim, 'Behold the goodness of God!'

All this goodness we are lovingly pleaded with to give heed to, not as a mere matter of curiosity, but as of momentous and personal concern. There are some things to which we naturally turn, and there are others to which our attention is easily directed; but, alas, it is not so with us in reference to the divine goodness. It lies all around us, speaking to us in the myriad voices of nature,

in the daily events of Providence, and in the precious pages of Revelation; but we have no ear to hear, no eyes to see—we are ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ But let us ponder our ways, and seek the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and then we shall truly behold ‘the goodness of God.’

We shall see it in every flower, and it will come to us most sweetly as we ‘consider the lilies of the field.’ When the celebrated African traveller Mungo Park was on one occasion well-nigh reduced to despair amid the arid wastes by which he was surrounded, he observed a little flower smiling in beauty at his feet. ‘Doth God care for you,’ said the pious traveller, ‘and will He forget *me*?’ And so learning a lesson of trust from the fragile flower, he pursued his journey, and soon found a place of refreshment and rest.

And what lessons of God’s care over us may we not daily learn! ‘I experienced a great mercy to-day,’ said a traveller to a friend. ‘In passing over a bridge my horse stumbled, but recovered itself; had it not done so, I would have been killed.’ ‘I also experienced a great mercy,’ was the reply; ‘I passed over that bridge, and my horse did *not* stumble.’ Yes, we observe dispensations that are striking and unusual,—deliverances from dangers, disease, and death; but we fail to note the goodness which is seen in years of health and freedom from sore distress, the daily gladness of the heart, and sunshine of the home.

But we must go to God’s word, if we would fully and savingly know his goodness. ‘The world by wisdom

knew not God.’ Till He revealed Himself, He was an unknown God. But now He declares that ‘judgment is His strange work.’ He delighteth in mercy. He is love, and He ‘so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ His blessed book, then, ought to be our daily companion,—‘a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path.’ But to how many is that word, which alone can guide us to salvation, a neglected book!

A minister was visiting a family belonging to his charge. He asked for a Bible. As it was handed to him, one of the children said in a whisper, ‘Mother, is this Sunday?’ What a disclosure! The Bible was merely a Sunday book. But are there not houses in which the Bible is not read even every Sabbath? and it may be there are houses in which it is never opened. Has this tract come into such a house?

Our hearts are by nature enmity against God; and if we refuse to listen to what he tells us of himself in his own word, how can we ever know what his thoughts toward us really are? If we thus remain in our guilty ignorance, unbelief, and enmity, we shall surely perish. He tells us that still He is in Christ reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. (2 Cor. v. 19.) Behold his wondrous love to sinners, in the cross of his dear Son! Shall not all that love and goodness lead us to repentance? Shall it not lead us, in adoring gratitude, to say, ‘We love Him, because He first loved us’?

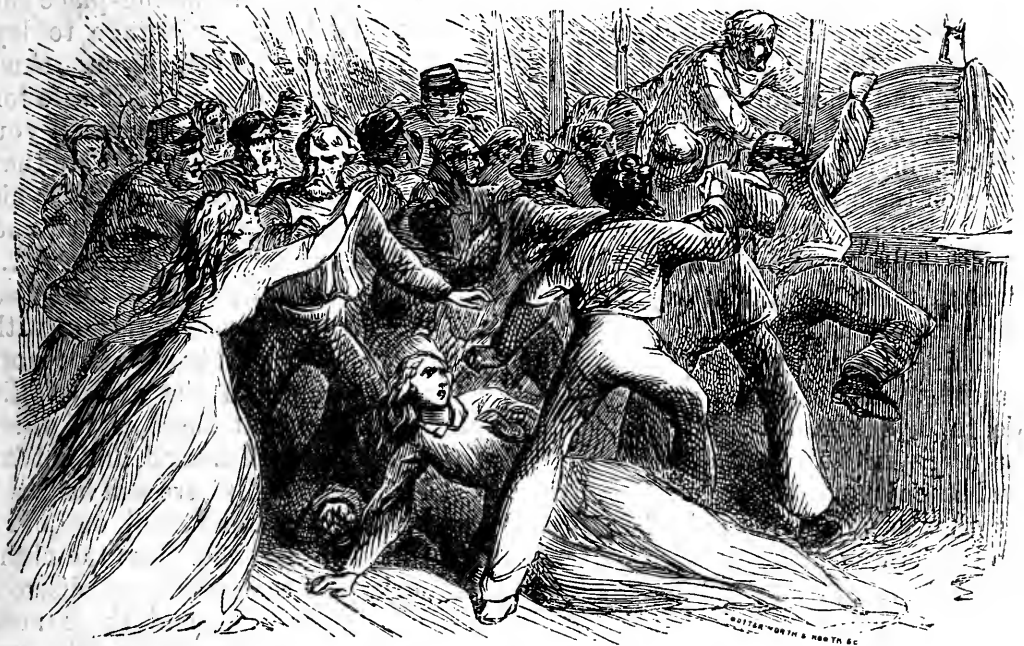
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MAY 1873.

THE LOSS OF THE *NORTHFLEET*.



On the night of the 22d of January last, as the good ship *Northfleet*, bound for Australia with four hundred and twelve emigrants on board, lay at anchor off Dungeness, in the Straits of Dover, a most sudden and terrible disaster befell her. In a moment, in the darkness of midnight, she was run into by a large steamer, and cut down to the water's edge. A most heart-rending scene ensued. The terror-stricken passengers hastened on deck. Before help could reach them the large ship went down. Some nine-

ty-seven were saved by the boats and by clinging to the rigging; but with fearful suddenness three hundred and fifteen persons went down with the ship, and were hurried into eternity.

In that terrible event, we have an instance of sudden destruction coming when apparently all was peace and safety; for when calamity overtook the *Northfleet* she was not far from land, or caught in a storm, or driven on a rocky coast, but in a comparatively calm sea. On a quiet night, she was riding, as was thought, safely at

anchor in a well-known roadstead. Her lights at the mast-head were burning bright, to prevent danger. Every precaution had been taken, and all seemed so thoroughly safe that most of the passengers and crew had retired to rest. They said 'Peace and safety.' But just then the sudden and terrible crash came, the wild cry of distress was heard, the dark waters rushed in, and in a few brief minutes the noble ship, with three hundred and fifteen men, women, and children, went down. Sudden destruction came upon them, and they could not escape.

Now this is just what is to happen to the world of the ungodly at last. They are to be buying, and selling, and getting gain, eating and drinking and making merry, thoroughly at ease; but just then the midnight cry is to be heard, and the Lord Jesus is to be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.' (1 Thess. v. 3.)

This also is what happens to every careless, unconverted sinner now, when death lays him low. His heart has been given to the world, its business and its enjoyments; he has been living as thoroughly at ease and in peace and quietness as if all were well with him for ever, or as if he had 'made a covenant with death' that it would never come to him. But ah! death does come; of a sudden it may be,—by an accident, or by some swift disease which gives no time to think,—the man is brought into desolation as in a moment. Sudden destruction comes upon him, and there is no escape. He is 'driven away in his wickedness,' 'punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.' (2 Thess. i. 9.)

Unconverted fellow-sinner, unless you repent, and turn unto the Lord now, all this may very soon be the case with you. You are at present

thinking only of peace and safety; but while you are out of Christ, the wrath of God abideth on you; you are 'condemned already' (John iii. 18, 36), and at any moment you may be struck down, and sent away into 'the blackness of darkness for ever.' Those on board the ill-fated ship had taken every precaution against danger, but you have taken none. Though often urged to it, you are neglecting the one thing which alone can give you safety. You have not fled to Christ. He is the great Substitute of sinners, who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree; who 'was made a curse for us,' that we might be delivered from the curse. And now He is the great refuge and hiding-place for sinners. Oh! flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you. And do it now. In Christ you are safe for ever. But how shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation? 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' (Prov. xxix. 1.)

In that terrible disaster we have also an example of persons perishing with plenty of help close at hand. One most sad circumstance in the case of the *Northfleet* was, that there were other vessels at anchor all around, and not far off, which could easily have sent help had they known, and every soul on board might have been saved. But the night was dark, and the signals of distress were not understood, and those near did not know what had happened; and hence, though help was at hand, yet no help came. They perished with ample means of safety around them.

And is not this just what takes place so often in spiritual things? Very many perish for ever, with the Bible in their hands, and all the means of grace and salvation around them. They live in the midst of Christian ordinances; the gospel is preached to them; and Christ, the almighty, loving Saviour of the lost, is offered to them, yea, pressed on their acceptance; they are urged and entreated to close with

Christ, and to be reconciled to God; and yet after all they perish! Those on board the *Northfleet* did not have help actually brought to them, though it was near; and therefore it was not their own blame that they perished. But, O unconverted soul, in your case help is not only at hand, it is actually brought to where you are. 'The word is nigh thee.' (Rom. x. 8.) The lifeboat comes to the very side of your sinking ship, and you are entreated to enter it. Christ in all His fulness and freeness is brought near to you, and you are urged to embrace Him; and if you are not saved, it will be all your own blame. 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' (John v. 40.) Poor sinner! you are perishing with plenty of help at hand. And what can be more terrible than to be surrounded with gospel privileges, and to have the gracious words of the loving Redeemer sounding in your ears, and yet to live without Christ, and to die unconverted, and to be lost for ever? Oh, 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!' to pass from under the preaching of the glad tidings of a full Christ and a free salvation, to lie down in everlasting sorrow in the world of woe!

Again, in that fearful calamity we have an example of the eagerness with which men strive to save their lives. What wild confusion the deck of that sinking ship presented on that dark night, when the danger was known! Crowds of men, women, and children, hurriedly roused from sleep, and half dressed and wild with terror, were running to and fro,—husbands seeking their wives, and wives seeking their husbands,—parents seeking their children, and children seeking their parents,—and all rushing to the boats because anxious to escape. And one man was so eager, that he would rather risk being shot than lose the chance of reaching the shore and being saved. Oh, what anxiety and eagerness to escape! and all most natural.

And is there not here a lesson for us

about our precious souls? If those persons were so eager, so naturally eager, to be delivered from a watery grave, oh, how eager every unsaved soul should be to be delivered from the wrath to come! Reader, have you yet escaped for your life? Have you got into the lifeboat? Are you safe in Christ? Oh, be in right earnest, and never rest until you are in Christ. It is not so much open sin as the want of thorough earnestness that is ruining so many in the present day. They are moral and blameless, but they are not converted, and not living for eternity. Ah! that quiet easy-mindedness is the sure way to perish. To be saved, you must awake, and be thoroughly in earnest. '*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate.' This night thy soul may be required of thee.

Last winter, six fishermen, some of them fruits of the late awakening at St. Monance, were caught in a storm off the coast of Fife. Their boat was swamped, and two out of the six were drowned. While clinging to the bottom of the boat, just before the fatal wave washed him away, one of those who perished was heard singing, amid the darkness and tempest,—

'My Jesus, I love thee; I know thou art mine!

For thee all the pleasures of sin I resign:
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art thou—

If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!'

He sank, and his mortal life was ended, but his soul was 'safe in the ark.' To him, to live was Christ and to die was gain. Dear fellow-sinner, hasten into Christ. That is the blessed vessel that can never be wrecked, can never be run down. All who are in Christ are safe for ever. Come to Him now! 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' (John x. 28.) 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matt. xi. 28.) 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' (John vi. 37.)

Yet again, in that terrible disaster we have an example of the earnestness with which men labour to rescue those in peril. As soon as it was known on shore that the *Northfleet* had been run down, and that hundreds were struggling in the water for their lives, boats and willing earnest men in abundance were speedily on the spot. The sufferers who were clinging to the rigging were soon rescued. Boats continued to row about the place, efforts were never relaxed, and the spot was never left, until it was known that there were no more to be saved.

Is it not just thus that the people of God should labour and strive to save perishing souls around them? If such earnest efforts were made to rescue men from drowning, what should there not be to rescue souls from perdition? There are multitudes of souls perishing on every side of us. Whatever else men may be, all who are out of Christ and unconverted are hastening down the broad road to destruction; and the people of God are called to the rescue. Shall we not arise and work?

The loss of the *Northfleet* was a terrible calamity, but what is it to the loss of a soul? The one happens only at distant intervals; the other, alas! is a daily occurrence. Nothing is so common as for men to live careless, and to die Christless. The darkness of night prevented those around from seeing the peril in which the *Northfleet* was placed; and oh, how often the darkness of unbelief prevents us from realizing the fearful danger to which the unconverted on every side of us are exposed! Let us awake to the terrible fact that souls are perishing,

and that God lays it on us as instruments to rescue them, and that unless they be rescued they must soon be in hell. And let us be out and out in earnest in working for Christ. Like Him, let each believer say, 'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' (John ix. 4.)

REST IN CHRIST.

'Does the gospel word proclaim
Rest for those that weary be?
Then, my soul, put in thy claim,
Since that promise speaks to thee!
Marks of grace I cannot show,
All polluted is my best;
But I weary am, I know,
And the weary long for rest.

'Burdened with a load of sin,
Harassed with tormenting doubt,
Hourly conflicts from within,
Hourly crosses from without,
All my little strength is gone,
Sink I must without supply;
Sure upon the earth is none
Can more weary be than I.

'In the ark the weary dove
Found a welcome resting-place;
Thus my spirit longs to prove
Rest in Christ the ark of grace.
Tempest-tossed I long have been,
And the flood increases fast;
Open, Lord, and take me in,
Till the storm be overpast.

'Safely lodged within Thy breast,
What a wondrous change I find!
Now I know Thy promised rest
Can compose a troubled mind.
You that weary are like me,
Hearken to the gospel call;
To the ark for refuge flee,
Jesus will receive you all.'

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1873.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.



THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, a man raised up of God to go everywhere preaching the gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," was born at Gloucester, in 1714. He showed talent very early; but not till he was about seventeen did he heartily give himself to study. At that age he began to be concerned about his soul's salvation. He thought that fasting, reading books of devotion, receiving the Lord's Supper, visiting the sick, and keeping strict watch over his words and ways, would recommend him to God. He bore ridicule, visited the jail-prisoners, practised austerities to mortify his flesh, hoping for rest, till led into the true way of life by some of his godly companions, who had found that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 3.) At the age of twenty-one the Bishop of Gloucester ordained him, in spite of his reluctance; for, said he, "I thought my friends wished to knock my head against the pulpit too young. How some young men do I do not know, but it was a deep concern to

me. I often prayed, till the sweat has dropt from my face like rain, that God would not let me go before He called me, and thrust me forth to the work. I remember my state in Gloucester; I know the room, I look up at the window every time I am there and walk along the street; I know the window, the bedside, and the floor upon which I have lain prostrate, saying, 'Lord, do not let me go yet! I shall be puffed up with pride!' Was not this like Moses in Exod. iv.?

He preached his first sermon in the church where he was baptized, to a very large congregation, with such power, that a complaint was made to the Bishop that "he had driven fifteen persons mad." Joining with John and Charles Wesley, he soon found the Lord sealing his labours everywhere. Persons of all ranks and of all denominations were attracted—there was such unction, and pathos, and power, in his solemn, earnest, loving words. The necessity of being born again, no entrance into the kingdom but by the cross of Christ, justification by the imputed righteousness of the Surety, were his constant themes. At Bristol, little more than a year after he had begun his ministry, though taking farewell of the people only for a season, all the congregation were in tears; and next day he spent from seven in the morning on till midnight in conversing with anxious souls.

He abounded in prayer before and after preaching; sometimes he spent a whole night in praise and prayer with his friends; and this habit he continued to the end of his course. At first he kept to churches, but having once been led to preach to about a hundred colliers on a hill-side, he went on, and soon found himself addressing in the open air congregations often numbering twenty thousand souls. It is said that such was his voice it could be heard a mile off, while the singing was heard at more than two miles distance.

At Edinburgh, in 1741, his word was with power, when he addressed

thousands in the old Orphan Hospital park; and yet more was he blessed at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and other places where revival work had begun. In Edinburgh, it was noticed that the boys of Heriot's Hospital felt the word, and very many of the most wicked of them were changed; and so also were some of the most abandoned characters in the town. So greatly was he blessed to the orphans, that the managers of those days had a portrait painted of him, which still hangs in the new Hospital at Dean. He tells in his letters that both at Edinburgh and in other places the boys and girls used to sit round him on the pulpit stairs, or as near as possible to where he stood in the open air, handing up to him notes from anxious persons, and requests for prayer; and that sometimes when he was pelted with dirt and eggs, these young people never moved from their place, but "turned up their little weeping eyes, and seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me."

We find him preaching at Bristol in the open air in November, "hands and body pierced with cold;" and even in the evening, "the stars shining exceeding bright." "This spiritual hunting is delightful, when the heart is in the work," says he, at a time when he had received both blows and wounds from a mob at Dublin. "Mountains are the best pulpits, and the heavens the best sounding-boards. O for power equal to my will! I would fly from pole to pole, publishing the everlasting gospel of the Son of God."

He crossed over to America again and again to proclaim Christ, thirteen times in all; and there, such men as Tennent, who sought to win souls, and gloried in the cross of Christ, at once gathered round him everywhere. We read of him at one time, almost dead with heat and fatigue, requiring to be lifted on his horse; at another time, "night was turned into day, when we rode singing through the woods." There, as at home, he looked upon preaching once a day as "short allowance."

Wherever he went, while the self-righteous and careless world sneered at him, and spoke all manner of evil against him, he left but one impression on all who understood spiritual things. "Eminent for humility in the midst of applause, for meekness and patience under reproach, a flaming fire for God and against sin, in the pulpit; easy and calm in conversation."—Mr. Willison of Dundee so wrote of him, and added, "He is singularly fitted to do the work of an *Evangelist*, and I have long been of opinion that it would be for the advantage of the world were this still to be a standing office in the Church." Besides all this preaching, he laboured in other ways. In one season he received above a thousand letters from persons under conviction; very many were plucked as brands from the fire, "who seemed to have been bred up for the gallows." In London, three hundred were admitted into communion on one Sabbath, after giving evidence of a change. His Tabernacle in London used to be called "*Whitefield's Soul-Trap*."

Even such men as Lord Chesterfield and Lord Bolingbroke came to hear, and wished to hear again. In Wales he preached up and down: "not one dry meeting." He only dreaded "flagging in the latter stages of the road." "No nestling, no nestling, on this side of eternity." "How ought ministers to work, before the night cometh!"

One part of his endowment for his evangelistic labours was no doubt his voice. It was so clear and powerful, and he was so able to use it when his heart was full, that tradition records that in Glasgow he melted a vast multitude into tears simply by his tenderly yearning appeal, "O Glasgow! Glasgow!" It may be interesting to know, from notes taken by a hearer, how plainly and simply this persuasive orator could preach. One morning, before setting off for America, he met a large congregation about six o'clock, and spoke to them on "My sheep hear my voice." (John x. 27.) "Some of

you, I suppose, do not choose in general to rise so soon as you have done this morning. Now that you are here, let me entreat you to inquire whether you belong to Christ or not? Man, woman, sinner! put thy hand to thy heart, and answer me! Didst thou ever hear Christ's voice so as to give thyself up to Him without reserve?" "Following Christ means following Him through life; following Him in every word and gesture. Whithersoever the shepherd turns his crook, the sheep follow him. They often tread upon one another, and hurt one another, they are in such haste in their way to heaven." And again, when he takes up the figure of a sheep: "Turn out a dog or a horse, and they will find their way home; but a sheep wanders about. A sheep bleats here and there, as much as to say, Dear stranger, show me my way home again." "Whither do I want to lead you? It is to *Calvary*, there to see at what an expense of blood Christ purchased those whom He calls His own. He redeemed them with His own blood. They are His not only by eternal election, but also by actual redemption in time, and were given to Him by the Father on condition that He should redeem them by His heart's blood."

He had trials and crosses, but could say, "I find the benefit. What should I be without them?" Among these were his partings with friends in Christ. "O Edinburgh, Edinburgh, surely thou must never be forgotten by me! For nearly twenty-eight days together I preached to nearly ten thousand souls every day. It would have melted your ladyship's heart (Lady Huntingdon) to have seen us part. Paul could stand a whipping, but not a weeping farewell." Again, in London, "Had a most awful parting season at Tottenham Court chapel." Another time, "At Glasgow we had good seasons, some quite remarkable. The partings were very cutting. In heaven all this will be over."

He "did not flag" to the last. His

visit to America in 1770 was remarked as more useful than any previous visit. But in the midst of all, he was summoned away by the Master. At Boston, in New England, he began to feel his strength giving way, yet preached for two hours. "I am weary, Lord Jesus, in thy work, but not of thy work," were his words before preaching for the last time at one place. "I had rather wear out than rust out." Asthma had begun to afflict him; and that night, having probably caught cold, his asthma increased. "I am almost suffocated," he said, and went to the open window for air; and soon after, "I am dying," as he leant on the breast of the minister for whom he had preached. In a few minutes after, he was gone, 30th September 1770. After a ministry of thirty-four years, he thus suddenly exchanged a life of happy labour for everlasting rest. His tomb is at Newbury Port, near Boston, New England, United States.

A friend once in his hearing expressed a wish to be present at his death, and listen to his last testimony to his Lord. He replied, that even if he were able to speak at such a time, he could say no more than he had been doing all through life; and he thought it very likely he might be taken away without giving any testimony. And so it was. And, dear reader, this is what you and I should desire—so to know the Lord Jesus and His finished work that, constrained by love of Him, we shall every day, to young and old, bear witness of what He is, and be ready to meet Him at a moment's notice!

But, reader, it was Whitefield's plain, earnest preaching of *Christ crucified*,

not his eloquence, that wrought such wonders. It was this that arrested the colliers at Kingsdown, near Bristol, degraded and sunken as they were. Their blackened faces were noticed to be furrowed with tears as they listened; and many among them turned to the Lord. The simple truth of God's own Son manifested in the flesh to live and die for sinners, was mighty through God to melt and subdue their souls. The cross, and the cross alone, is the Holy Spirit's rod of power for bringing waters out of the flinty rock. This same Whitefield could paint so eloquently the scenes he set before his audience, that on one occasion, when describing the pitiable case of a blind beggar on a dark night, deserted even by his dog, groping his way along a dangerous road that led right forward to a precipice, and about to take the fatal step over the edge, his audience drew in their breath, and a noble man present, in the depth of excitement, actually rushed forward from his seat to save the man! This was the triumph of eloquence, but this was not, after all, his rod of power. It was when with loving heart he was telling the story of the cross, God-man, the Sin-bearer, in the room of the guilty, that he saw the enmity of the carnal mind give way, and sinners converted to God.

And so it is, O man, in our case. Other things may arrest us; impressive and glowing words may produce a powerful effect for the moment; but it is Christ the Sin-bearer, Christ crucified, Christ the sinner's Substitute, the Lamb slain, that meets our inmost need, and brings abiding and eternal rest. None but Christ! None but Christ crucified!

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1873.

REPENT, OR PERISH!

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—LUKE xiii. 3.



See page 4.

READER,—I can well believe that at first sight these words look stern and severe. "Repent, or perish!" "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish."—"Is this the gospel?" I can fancy some one saying; "Are these the glad tidings?" "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"

But from whose lips did these words come? They came from one who loves us with a love that passeth knowledge, even Jesus Christ the Son of God. The words that come from lips like these must surely be words of love.

And, after all, what greater proof of love can be given than to warn a friend of coming danger? The cry of "Fire!—fire!" at midnight may sometimes startle a man out of his sleep, rudely, harshly, unpleasantly; but who would complain, if that cry was the means of saving his life?

I. *What is repentance?*

Sixty times, at least, we find repentance spoken of in the New Testament. What was the charge which Jesus gave His disciples when He left the world? That "repentance and re-

mission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." (Luke xxiv. 47.) What was the concluding appeal of the first sermons which Peter preached? "Repent ye, and be converted." (Acts iii. 19.) What, then, is repentance? When can it be said of any man that he repents?

Repentance is a thorough change of man's natural heart upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin as soon as we can act and think, as the bird takes to flying and the fish takes to swimming. Now, when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Ghost, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the word of God calls "repentance."

True repentance begins with *knowledge of sin*. The eyes of the penitent man are opened. He sees with dismay and confusion the length and breadth of God's holy law, and the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. He discovers, to his surprise, that in thinking himself a "good sort of man," and a man with a "good heart," he has been under a huge delusion. He sees that he is neither more nor less than a great sinner.

True repentance goes on to work *sorrow for sin*. The heart of a penitent man is touched with deep remorse because of his past transgressions. He mourns over time wasted, over talents mis-spent, over God dishonoured, over his own soul injured.

True repentance proceeds, further, to produce in a man *confession of sin*. He feels he must speak to that God against whom he has sinned. He must pour out his heart, and acknowledge his iniquities, at the throne of grace. He can keep nothing back. He goes before God, pleading nothing for himself, and willing to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

True repentance, furthermore, shows itself before the world in a thorough *breaking off from sin*. The life of a penitent man is altered. What God forbids, he now desires to avoid. He

strives in all ways to keep clear of sin. He ceases to do evil. He learns to do well. He breaks off sharp from bad ways and bad companions.

True repentance, in the last place, shows itself by producing in the heart a settled habit of *deep hatred of all sin*. The penitent man abhors that which is evil. He delights in the law of God. He groans under a sense of indwelling corruption; but still, for all that, the general bias of his heart is towards God, and away from evil.

All true Christians will recognise something which they know and have felt in the things which I have just been saying. Search, then, and see what you know of it in your own soul.

Take heed that your repentance be a business of your heart. It is not a grave face, or a sanctimonious countenance, or a round of self-imposed austerities,—it is not this alone that makes true repentance towards God. The real grace is something far deeper than a mere affair of face, and clothes, and days, and forms.

Take heed that your repentance be a repentance attended by a thorough forsaking of sin. Sentimental people can cry when they hear moving sermons on Sundays, and yet return to the ball, the theatre, and the opera, in the week after. Mere sentimental excitement, without thoroughly breaking off from sin, is not the repentance which God approves.

Take heed, above all things, that your repentance be closely bound up with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. See that your convictions be convictions that never rest except at the foot of the cross whereon Jesus Christ died. Seek that contrition of soul under which a man feels much about Christ, and grieves to think of the despite he has done to so gracious a Saviour. Reader, see that such repentance be yours.

II. *Why is repentance needful?*

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are distinct, express, and emphatic, "Except ye repent, ye shall all like-

wise perish." All, all, without exception, need repentance toward God. All born of the seed of Adam, all, without exception, need repentance toward God. The queen upon her throne, and the pauper in the work-house, the rich man in his drawing-room, the servant-maid in the kitchen—all by nature need repentance. All are born in sin, and all must repent and be converted, if they would be saved. All must repent as well as believe the gospel.

But whence comes the necessity of repentance? Why is such tremendously strong language used about this necessity? What are the reasons, what the causes, why repentance is so needful?

For one thing, without repentance there is *no forgiveness of sins*. The tears of repentance wash away no sins. That is the office, that the work, of the blood of Christ alone. But still it is no less true that justified people are always penitent people. God in Christ is willing to receive rebellious man, and grant him peace, if he only comes to Him in Christ's name, however wicked he may have been. But God requires—and requires justly—that the rebel shall throw down his arms. The Lord Jesus Christ desires to see a man hate the sins that he wishes to be forgiven. Let some men call this "legality" if they will. Let some call it "bondage" if they please. I take my stand on Scripture. The testimony of God's word is plain and unmistakeable. Justified people are always penitent people. Without repentance there is no forgiveness of sins.

For another thing, without repentance there is *no happiness in the life that now is*. There is a conscience in all men, and that conscience must be satisfied. So long as conscience feels that sin has not been repented and forsaken, so long it will not be quiet, and will not let a man feel comfortable. You may laugh, and dance, and go upon Sundays in excursion-trains, and crack good jokes, and sing good songs,

and say, "Cheer, boys, cheer!" and "There's a good time coming,"—but all this is no proof that you are happy. So long as you do not quarrel with sin you will never be a truly happy man.

Have you ever heard of the great clock of St. Paul's in London? At midday, in the roar of business, when carriages, and carts, and waggon, and omnibuses go rolling through the streets, how many never hear that great clock strike! But when the work of the day is over, and the roar of business has passed away,—when men are gone to sleep, and silence reigns in London,—then at twelve, at one, at two, at three, at four, the sound of that clock may be heard for miles around.—Twelve!—One!—Two!—Three!—Four!—How that clock is heard by many a sleepless man! That clock is just like the conscience of the impenitent man. While he has health and strength, and goes on in the whirl of business, he will not hear conscience. But the time will come when he must retire from the world, and lie down on the sick-bed and look death in the face. And then the clock of conscience, that solemn clock, will sound in his heart, and if he has not repented, will bring wretchedness and misery to his soul.

III. *The encouragement there is to repentance.* What is there to lead a man to repent?

I know how slow man is to give up sin. As well tell him to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, or cut off a right foot, as tell him to part with his darling sins. I know the strength of old habits and early ways of thinking about religion. I know the power of pride, and that "fear of man that bringeth a snare." I know the dislike there is in people to being thought "a saint," and supposed to care about religion. But there are things in the word of God which ought to arouse every one to repent without delay. I would not have one soul lay down this tract and say, "The thing cannot be done, it is impossible." I should like all to say, "There is hope! There is hope!"

There is an open door! The thing can be done! By the grace of God a man may repent."

Hear *what a gracious Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ is*. I say to every doubting soul, look at Christ, think of Christ. He is one "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." He is one anointed, "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance as well as remission of sins." He is one that "came to seek and to save that which was lost." He is one who said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Hear for another thing, *what glorious promises the word of God contains*. It is written, "Whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy." It is written again, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I remember hearing of a mother whose daughter ran away from her, and lived a life of sin. For a long time no one could tell where she was.—Yet that daughter came back a true penitent. She was taught to mourn for sin.—She turned to Christ and believed in Him. Old things passed away, and all things became new. Her mother was asked one day to tell what she had done to bring her daughter back. Her reply was a very striking one. She said, "I prayed for her night and day." But that was not all. She went on to say, "I never went to bed at night without leaving my front door

unlocked, and the door on the latch. I thought if my daughter came back some night when I was in bed, she should never be able to say that she found the door shut. She should never be able to say that she came to her mother's home, but could not get in." And so it turned out. Her daughter came back one night, and tried the door, and found the door open, and at once came in, to go out and sin no more. That open door was the saving of her soul.—Reader, that open door is a beautiful illustration of the heart of God towards sinners! The door of mercy is set open. The door is not yet locked. God's heart is full of love, God's heart is full of compassion. Whosoever a man may have been, and whatsoever a man may have been, at midnight, at any time, whenever he returns to God he will find God willing to receive him, ready to pardon him, and glad to have him at home. All things are ready. Whosoever will, may come in.

To every impenitent soul who may happen to read "Repent, or Perish!" what stronger warning can I give than the words of my Lord and Master—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"? Yes! you who are reading, and, as you read, know you are not yet at peace with God,—you who are halting, lingering, undecided, in religion,—*you are the man* to whom the words of the text should come with power, "Except thou repentest, thou," even thou, "shalt perish."

—Rev. J. C. Ryle.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1873.

WHAT IF IT BE ALL TRUE?



See page 2

JOHN NEWTON had a pious mother, who was taken from him when he was only seven years old. She taught him, when but an infant, to pray, and sowed in his young heart the seeds of his future spiritual life.

When a boy, he was led to think much of God and of eternal things; but his impressions wore off, and he entered on a course of sin. It seemed as if he had broken loose from all bonds, and delighted only in what was evil.

He was thrown from a horse, and

was in great danger of his life, but was preserved. Then his conscience awoke once more, and he trembled at the thought of appearing before God, sinful and unready. Under this dread he forsook his sins for a while, and gave up his profane living and speaking; but the reformation was only outward, and did not last long.

At another time, dread of God's wrath overtook him, and he began to live, as he thought, a very religious life. He thought to make himself righteous, and so to win God's favour.

He spent much time in reading the Scriptures; he prayed; he fasted; he would hardly trust himself to speak, lest he should utter a vain or sinful word. Ignorant of God's righteousness, he was bent on having one of his own, by having which he hoped to pacify his conscience, and get quit of his fear of coming wrath.

This did not last long. He gave up religion altogether, and became an infidel. He now rushed into wickedness of every kind, and yet he only became more wretched. He went to sea on board a slave ship, and took part in that horrid trade. He was reduced to utter poverty,—starving, and sinning, and blaspheming,—his heart hard and his conscience seared. He was in very deed the prodigal son, wasting his substance with riotous living, yet not "coming to himself," nor saying, "I will arise, and go to my father." Once and again he was in peril of his life by sea and land. Half-intoxicated, and dancing on deck one midnight, his hat went overboard, and he was throwing himself after it when laid hold of and dragged back by his comrades. Thus he hurried on in sin, as he himself in one of his hymns describes it:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear."

Finding one day a religious book on board the vessel, he took it up, and looking into it, was led to ask the question, "WHAT IF ALL THIS BE TRUE?" The thought terrified him, and he closed the book. He went to bed that night as usual, having contrived to put this solemn question out of his mind. In the dark night he was awakened by the dash of waves. A storm had risen, a terrible sea had swept over the vessel, and the cabin where he lay was fast filling. The cry rose, "The ship is sinking!" All was confusion and terror. He twice made for the deck, but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who bade him bring a knife. As he was returning for the knife, another man went up in his

place, and was washed away, God thus reminding the spared one of his doom, and of the wonderful escape he had made.

Thoughts of other days began to come back upon him; the remembrance of those whom he had loved affected him, and his heart seemed softening. For four weeks the vessel was tossed to and fro, he sometimes at the helm and sometimes at the pumps, wave upon wave breaking over him. Then, in the midst of danger, day and night his cry went up, "O God, save me, or I perish;" and, "The God of the Bible forgive me for His Son's sake;" and, "My mother's God, the God of mercy, have mercy upon me."

That storm was to John Newton what the earthquake was to the jailor at Philippi: it brought him to his knees. It brought his sins before him. It brought before him his eternal ruin. It brought him to the cross and blood of Christ. The hymn of which we have already quoted the first two lines goes on to tell his experience:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till A NEW OBJECT struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career."

The "new object" which met his eye, as he stood at the helm or walked the deck, with the waves dashing over him, was the crucified Christ. The Cross, and the Son of God there bearing our sins, stood out before him in the brightness of divine love. For thus he sings:

"I saw one hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood."

As it was with Simon Peter when the Lord turned and looked upon him, so was it with John Newton. In both cases the look of love melted the sinner down:

"Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke."

That look of love, holy love, went through and through his conscience, making him feel his sin in all its vileness. *Sin*, which had hitherto been treated by him as a mere trifle, or been altogether overlooked, now presented itself in all its terrors. He was doomed; he was lost: what shall he do?

"My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there."

He is overwhelmed; he is in despair. That look of holy love has smitten him through and through. It says to him: "Thou art the man; thou didst it all; thou hast nailed me to the tree; had it not been for thy sins, I had not been here." But as he looks, he sees something more in that look, and hears the voice of pardon coming from the cross:

"A second look He gave, which said,
I freely all forgive:
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live."

This second look speaks of peace. He reads forgiveness in it—free forgiveness to the chief of sinners,—forgiveness to "the old African blasphemer," and his troubled conscience is pacified. "I have found a ransom," is the message which removes his terror; and this ransom is by the blood and death of the Son of God. That ransom suffices. God looks at it and is satisfied; He says it is enough. The sinner looks at it and is satisfied; he says it is enough. The burden of guilt is unloosed, and falls from his shoulders. He is set free from guilt, from terror, from bondage. He knows the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. He has believed, and he is saved; nay, and he knows that he is saved, for he credits the heavenly record concerning Him to whom he is looking:

"Thus, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too."

Forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb—forgiveness through the belief of the Holy Spirit's testimony to the finished work of Immanuel,—this is now his resting-place; and his whole life is changed. That holy pardon has made him a holy man.

And now let us come back to the first thought that struck him,—

"WHAT IF ALL THIS BE TRUE?"

Here is a question for us, no less than for him.

If eternity be true, then it becomes me to prepare for it, for endless terror or endless joy can be no trifles. If I must live for ever, then I must seek so to live here as to make that everlasting living a happy one. Otherwise it had been good for me that I had never been born.

If sin be true, then I must not trifle with it; and if God hates it utterly, then I must hate it too, and I must get quit of it. And I must get quit of it in God's way, for no other way of deliverance will avail. That which is so awfully real and powerful as sin is, can only be taken away by something as real and as powerful as itself.

If the cross of Christ be true, then I must deal with it accordingly. It is meant to be the death of sin and the life of righteousness. It is meant to be the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. It is meant to be the place where all sin is borne by another for us, so that we live by the death of another, and are pardoned by the condemnation of another. My acceptance of the great work done there is my deliverance from wrath, and sin, and death. I am not bidden *work* for pardon: I get it freely, and without desert. I am not bidden *wait* for pardon: I get it at once as a finished and provided gift, bestowed upon every one who will go to God for it, and take it in His appointed way.

If all these things be true, then I must be *in earnest*. Everything connected with God and Christ, with sin and pardon, with life and death, with wrath and favour, with time and

eternity, is so unspeakably momentous, that I must be up and minding these things without delay. If I am not in earnest, I am a fool; for what shall it profit me to gain the whole world and to lose my soul? I must seek the right thing. I must seek it at the right time. I must seek it in the right way. I must go straight to God for all I want; and I must meet Him at the cross.

I knew one who was all his life seeking, and yet he never seemed to find. He was trying to be happy, but knew not how. He was rich, and had everything that this world could give him. He went about from place to place in search of pleasure. He lived a long life, and spent it in the midst of luxury, eating and drinking and making merry. He had large lands; he had many friends; his house was filled with pictures, and statues, and everything that art could provide for him.

Yet his weary eye told you that he was not happy. Life seemed to have no joy in it; and yet every day, from morning to night, he was going about in quest of joy. "Who will show me any good?" was his cry. But the good never came. He passed through life weary and unhappy, though apparently enjoying to the full all its pleasures. He died about the age of fourscore, and he did not seem ever to have known a happy day. He lived in vain, both for himself and others.

My friend, would you be *happy*? You must go to God for His love and joy. This world, with riches and pleasures to the full, will do nothing for you. It cannot fill you. It cannot give you peace. But the God who

made you can fill you and give you peace,—His own satisfying peace. Go *immediately*, and get it from Him. He giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.

My friend, would you be *safe*? You must seek your safety in the Son of God, and beneath the protection of His cross. In Him only you are safe. His cross is a shield and hiding-place for time and eternity. Time will soon be done: the last trumpet may soon sound, and you must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give account of the deeds done in the body. Seek *immediate safety* in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. He waits to welcome the guilty. He loves to bless the sinner. Go to Him now, and deal with Him fully, and fervently, and honestly, about that soul of yours. He will not send you empty away.

My friend, is it your desire to be delivered from sin? Then look to Him on whom alone there is deliverance. He saves from sin. He wishes you to be holy. He will make you fruitful in every good word and work. And remember the solemn words which so many overlook: "Follow *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord;" and remember again the end for which God saves us, "that we might be partakers of his *holiness*." Turn away from all evil. Be not conformed to this world. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1873.

"ME TOO;" OR. BLIND MARY HAMILTON.



ONE Sabbath afternoon in early spring, I received a summons to what appeared to be the deathbed of a poor blind girl in one of the city poor-houses. As I passed along the quiet streets, my mind was filled with very sad and anxious thoughts concerning her. Her history was a truly mournful one. The cholera made her an orphan at five years of age, and left her nearly alone in the wide world, and ere she was sixteen the motherless girl had fallen into evil hands. And now, before twenty summers had passed over her head, she was cast aside into the crowded ward of a workhouse infirmary, to languish for many months in total blindness, and then to die. When I first saw her, I felt it hard to believe that the clear grey eyes which were raised so appealingly to my face were sightless, and would never again behold the sun; and it seemed equally hard to believe that such a history could belong to one so childlike and modest in appearance and manner. Her friendless, helpless state deeply stirred my pity, and for long she had

been the object of much solicitude. Another friend too visited her regularly, seeking to win the poor lost one to Jesus. She clung to us gratefully and affectionately, received our visits gladly, but kept a veil always over the state of her mind. She was remarkably truthful, and would not say a single word that she did not feel; and so, although her tears often flowed freely when we read or spoke to her, we were left in ignorance as to the source from which they sprung. The brain disease which had deprived her of sight also affected her speech, and made it needful to deal with her in the most cautious and gentle manner. So, remembering that He whose messages we sought to bring comes down "like rain upon the *mown* grass," we went on pouring his own healing truths into the ear of that bruised and blighted one, leaving it to the gracious Spirit to apply them to the heart. But it had often been a trial of faith to work on so long in the dark, and sometimes impatience and unbelief had whispered to us that our labour was all in vain. Not that we would have given up visiting the poor blind girl in her loneliness and desolation. She clung to us too fondly to let that be possible. But we were in danger of sinking into a hopeless, faithless way of seeking her spiritual good; and when the blessing so long sought came at last, we felt rebuked and humbled by it.

When I entered the ward on this occasion, the bright smile of welcome was wanting which usually lighted up the poor blind face at the first sound of my voice. Mary lay in a state of unconsciousness, her head covered with a fly blister, and her countenance swollen and distorted with suffering.

I thought it was going to be as I had often anticipated,—an aggravation of the brain disease removing her altogether out of our reach even before the end came—that sad, sad end to watchers by the sick-bed, when the sufferer "dies and makes no sign," and the shrouded spirit sets forth on its solitary

journey we know not whither. The nurse told me, however, that she had been sensible during the early part of the day, and often crying for me. So I began softly to sing a favourite hymn beside her. Before I was done I saw she heard me, and felt her press my hand; and as I continued at intervals slowly and distinctly to repeat passages of Scripture and hymns, I became aware that she was listening with an intensity of interest I had never seen in her before. Several times she tried to speak, but her stammering tongue found no utterance but in broken, disjointed words. From these, however, it was not difficult to gather that she was quite alive to her position, and that her one desire was to hear about "*Him! Him!*"—the only *Him* "who can do helpless sinners good." I sought to set Jesus before her in Scripture words, in all His power and willingness to save to the uttermost. I repeated these verses, "The Lord is full of pity, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon Him." And the great expression of this mercy, I said, is in the Lord Jesus Christ: "He spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death for us all." "He so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." As I spoke these words, never shall I forget the eager look of that blind face, nor the cry that echoed through the spacious ward—"Me too! me too!" She could say no more; but how my heart rejoiced and gave thanks for these two little words! The cry seemed to me to be that of the new-born soul putting in its claim for a share in God's unspeakable gift,—laying hold with appropriating faith on the Saviour freely offered in the gospel. Yes, Mary, dear Mary, that "*whosoever*" takes in "*you too*:" "*Whosoever* believeth shall not perish;" "*Whosoever* will, let him take of the water of life freely;" and, "*Him that cometh*," saith Jesus, "I will in no wise cast out."

Contrary to all expectation, Mary was at that time brought back from the grave's mouth to linger on its very brink for many weeks. After she recovered clear consciousness and the power of speech, she was for some time in great anxiety and distress. "Me a sinner! God be merciful to me a sinner!" was the plaintive moan which the nurse reported to have been often on her lips. I was unable to see her at this period, but after an interval of absence I heard she was worse again, and hastened to her bed. She was perfectly conscious, and very calm. "I am dying," she said; "the doctor tells me so. He says I can't last long now." "How do you feel," I said, "in the prospect of so soon entering the presence of the holy, sin-hating God?" "Quite happy." "How so?" "I have long been asking the Lord Jesus to wash away all my sins, and for a while past I have been happy, happy. I long to go and be with Him." Often she expressed this desire. I asked her another day to tell me the thought that kept her so peaceful and happy with death and eternity so near at hand. Slowly and brokenly (for speaking never ceased to be an effort to her) she repeated poor Tom's couplet,—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

To a dear young servant of God, whose touching prayer by her dying bed moved most who heard it to tears, she spoke of "Jesus only, Jesus only," as her one ground of hope. "I'm such a sinner, such a sinner," she whispered another day, but "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth from all sin." "What but the presence of Jesus could support me now in sufferings like these?" "God loves me, or He would not afflict me thus," gave glimpses into the secret consolations which strengthened her heart in the fiery furnace of suffering through which she passed, whilst patience had its perfect work, and she learned to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Her gentle, grateful spirit endeared

her to all around. Even when she could no longer speak, her lips formed a mute "thank-you" for every little office of kindness her helplessness rendered necessary. Her memory all through her illness was so clouded and imperfect, the story of her past life seemed to come back to her only in fitful and partial gleams. So did the verses of Scripture truths which she had learned in her early youth. It was such a pleasure when I could piece together the disjointed fragments of some verse or hymn she was striving to remember, and repeat it to her clearly.

One day, after some verses of the 119th Psalm had been sung, she wept, and said she had got a prize in the Sabbath school for saying that psalm from beginning to end, and now she found not a trace of it left in her memory. Alas! poor Mary; had it been "hid in her heart," she would not so have sinned against her God, nor so early forsaken the Guide of her youth. She had gone astray like a lost sheep; and though the Good Shepherd had sought and found her at the last, and redeemed her by his own strong hand out of the power of the enemy, what a torn, bruised, and for this world ruined, trophy of His grace was now gathered in His arms and carried in His bosom! But "as the shepherd takes out of the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear" (what seems to be only a mutilated fragment of his prey), so the gracious One who delivers the prey of the Terrible can form, out of one utterly destroyed for the life that now is, a vessel of glory to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in the life which is to come. There can be no doubt that at the hand of some one of Satan's ministers, ever so ready to spread their toils in the way of the young and giddy, the blighted life of Mary Hamilton will be required. But she in her deep humiliation took all on herself. "My own folly led me astray at the first; no one is to blame but myself." Girlish vanity—the pride of personal appearance, and love of dress

unbecoming her station—had been the snare, turning her feet into that downward path which leads to depths of ruin and evil out of which few are ever recovered. Alas! alas! little trace of beauty remained in the weary suffering face, turning so restlessly from side to side on the hard pillow of the work-house pallet. Some days before her death her countenance resumed its natural appearance, and though there was no light in the dark grey eyes, and the features were sharp and pale, the lovely, quiet dying face showed how truly in her heyday of girlish beauty she might have been called “Bonnie Mary Hamilton.” The day before she died I sat beside her for the last time. The May sunshine flooded the dreary ward, and fell warmly across Mary’s bed. The sunbeams lighted up a handful of white lilies which I had laid down there when I took out my Bible. Pure, spotless, and fragrant, how they contrasted and yet harmonized with the fading human flower at whose feet they lay! What a contrast to all that sense could see in her,—a poor, soiled, crushed thing, trodden under foot and cast out to perish on the wayside, the reproach of all that passed by! But to the eye of faith, a fair lily of the Lord’s own planting, gathered from amongst the thorns, washed from defiling stains, and made whiter than snow in the blood of the Lamb. So that the pure eyes of Him that is holy, Him that is true, could look upon her and say, “Behold, thou art fair, my love, there is no spot in thee,” now that He was about to “present her faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

She could not speak save in a low whisper, but with parted lips she listened intently to the words I read; a look of sweet, satisfied content settled on her face. It quivered and trembled when I kissed her cheek, and bade her farewell. The thin fingers clasped mine lingeringly, and then we parted till, according to her own whispered hope, “we meet in heaven.” Often before on leaving her she had asked me to pray that, “if it were the Lord’s will, she might be in heaven before the morning’s light;” and so it was. In the first grey dawn of the morning the summons came, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;” and almost before those about her were aware, the redeemed spirit of the blind girl passed into the eternal day dawning, the dark shadows of sin and suffering having fled away for ever.

“Hark! how the gospel trumpet sounds!
Christ and free grace therein abounds;
Free grace to such as sinners be;
And if free grace, *why not for me?*”

The Saviour died, and by His blood
Brought rebel sinners home to God;
He died to set the captives free,
And why, my soul, *why not for thee?*

The blood of Christ, how sweet it sounds,
To cleanse and heal the sinner’s wounds!
The streams thereof are rich and free,
And why, my soul, *why not for thee?*

Thus Jesus came the poor to bless,
To clothe them in God’s righteousness;
This robe is spotless, full, and free,
And why, my soul, *why not for thee?*

Eternal life by Christ is given,
And ruined rebels raised to heaven;
Then sing of grace so rich and free,
And shout, my soul, *’Tis all for thee!*”

A. B. C.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1874.

THE CUMBER-GROUND:

A NEW YEAR WARNING. BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also."—LUKE xiii. 7, 8.



THE comparison of a man to a tree, and of human works to fruit, is exceedingly common in Scripture. When men plant trees in a vineyard, they very naturally expect to find fruit thereon. Even thus, speaking after the manner of men, it is natural that the great Maker should look for the good fruit of obedience and love from the men who are the objects of his providential care. Man is very much more God's property than a tree can ever be the property of the man who plants a vineyard. Trees that bring not forth fruit must be cut down; and sinners who bring not forth repentance, faith, and holiness, must die. There is a time for felling fruitless trees, and an appointed season for hewing down and casting into the fire the useless sinner. What if that season *to thee* were to be this New Year?

We address ourselves at once to those who are living without God and without Christ, among whom many of my readers must be numbered. O may the Holy Spirit find them out by our word, and bring them in real earnest to consider their ways!

I. To all unprofitable, unfruitful sinners, we utter this hard, but needful sentence: TO CUT YOU DOWN WOULD BE MOST REASONABLE. It is right and reasonable to fell barren trees, and it is just as right and reasonable that *you* should be cut down.

1. *Sufficient space for repentance has already been given.* The gospel has been put close by your roots, hundreds of times; you have a Bible in every house; you have, some of you, had the advantage of godly training from your youth up. You have been warned again, and again, and again, sometimes sternly, sometimes affectionately. O barren tree, you are barren still! What is the use, then, of sparing you? Sparing has been tried, and it has had no effect: the other remedy is certain—"Cut it down."

2. *All this while there has been no sign of improvement whatever in thee.* If there had been some little fruit, if some tears of repentance had been flowing from thine eyes, if there had been some seeking after Christ, if thine heart had been a little softened, if thou hadst but a little faith in Jesus, though it were but as a grain of mustard seed, then there were indeed reasons for sparing thee; but, sorrowful to add, *thy sparing has had an ill effect upon thee.* Up to this time thou hast been hardening, instead of softening. The gospel has not now the effect it had once on thee. The voice which could once make thy soul shiver cannot do so now. O God! it is reasonable indeed that thou shouldst uplift that sharp axe of thine and say, "Cut it down."

3. But there are other reasons why "Cut it down" is most reasonable, *when we consider the owner, and the other trees.* First, *here is a tree which*

brings forth no fruit whatever, and therefore is of no service. It is like money badly invested, bringing in no interest: it is a dead loss to the owner. What is the use of keeping it? The dead tree is neither for use nor for ornament: it can yield no service, and afford no pleasure. And even so with thee, sinner. What is the use of thee? Thou art of use to thy children, to thy family; in business, thou mayst be of some service to the world. But then the world did not make thee; and thy children, and thy family, they did not create thee. God has made thee, God has planted thee, God is thy proprietor: thou hast done nothing for God. You neither in reality pray to God, nor praise God, nor live for God; you live for anything, for everything, for nothing, sooner than live for the God that made you. Then what is the good of you to God? Judge then whether it be not right that the Lord should say, "Cut it down."

But there is a worse consideration, namely, that *all this while you have been filling up a space which somebody might have been filling to the glory of God.* Where that barren tree stands, there might have been a tree loaded with fruit. You are cumbering the ground, as the text says; that is, doing nothing but just being a cumbersome nuisance. If another mother had those children, she would pray for them, and weep over them, and teach them of Christ; but you do no such thing. If another man had that money, it would be laid out for God's glory; and you lay it out for your own pleasure, and forget the God who gave it to you. If another had sat in that seat which you occupy, it may be that he had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes; but you, like the men of Capernaum, have been hardened instead of being softened under the gospel. It may be, man of influence, if another had stood where you have stood in the world's judgment, he would have led hundreds in the path of right; but you, standing there, have done no such thing. Oh!

if another had your gifts, young man, he would not be making a company laugh at the tavern, but pleading with all his might for Jesus. If another had but your gifts of utterance, he would be spending in prayer and teaching, what you now spend in fun and frolic to make amusement for fools. Take heed, O my dear but sinful reader, lest the Lord remove thee suddenly, and fill up thy place with one who will be obedient to his will.

Moreover, and to make bad worse even to the worst degree, *all this while ungodly men are spreading an evil influence.* The very fact that you are spared, O sinner, is doing mischief in the world. Do you see that? Your mere existence in this world is to others an inducement to continue in sin; for while you are spared, others look at you and say, "God has not punished him." Therefore they infer that he will not punish sin at all.

II. We remind thee, O impenitent sinner, that FOR GOD TO HAVE SPARED YOU SO LONG IS A VERY WONDERFUL THING.

Consider, *God is not sparing you because he is insensible towards your sins.* He is angry with the wicked every day. If you had been angry half an hour, you would have come to hard words or blows; but here is the Judge of all the earth angry every day for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty years with some of you, and yet he has not smitten. Mark, sinner, he has spared you *not because he was unable to have destroyed you.* The Lord has but to will it, and your soul is required of you. *And what then?* Admire and wonder at this longsuffering.

Again, some have been guilty of very God-provoking sins. Some offences provoke God much more than others. I believe that *cursing* does, for it is wanton insolence, by which nothing can be gained. O sinner, did you ever ask God to damn you, and are you not astonished that he has not done it?

Infidelity, again; and how many are guilty of that! How provoking to

God for a man to deny his very existence—standing up and breathing God's air, and living upon God's life, and yet saying that there is no God!

So, again, is *persecution*. There may be some here present who have persecuted wife and child because of their following Christ. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye," saith God. If any man injures your children, the blood is in your cheek at once, if you are a father, and you feel that you will show yourself strong in their defence: even so the heavenly Father will avenge his own elect. Take heed.

Again, there is that *quenching of conscience* of which some of you have been guilty. Perhaps there are not many of you who would indulge in these grosser sins; but there are some of you quite as bad in another sense, for you know the right, and choose the wrong; you hear of Christ, and do not give your hearts to him. You must have had hard work to do this. You must have had a terrible tug with conscience, some of you. I know you have been stifling many a holy desire; and when the Spirit of God has been striving with you, you have been so desperately set on mischief, that still you have gone on in the error of your ways. Now these sins provoke God. What think you? Shall God be always provoked? Shall mercy be preached to you for ever in vain? Will you continue to be his enemies, and shall he never proclaim war against your souls? It is a marvel, it is a wonder, that these God-provoking sins have so long been borne with, and that you are not yet cut down.

III. And now, WHAT IS THE REASON FOR ALL THIS LONGSUFFERING? Why is it that this cumber-ground tree has not been cut down? The answer is, because *there is one who pleads for sinners.* I have shown you—and some of you will think I have shown you with very great severity too—how reasonable it is that you should be

cut down. Would to God you would tremble for yourselves! But what has been the secret cause that you have been kept alive? The answer is, *Jesus Christ has pleaded for you, the crucified Saviour has interfered for you.* And you ask me "Why?" I answer, because *Jesus Christ has an interest in you all.* We do not believe in general redemption. But nothing can be much more plain in Scripture, it seems to me, than that all sinners are spared as the result of Jesus Christ's death; and this is the sense in which men are said to trample on the blood of Jesus Christ. Sinner, whether thou knowest it or not, thou art indebted to him that did hang upon the tree for the breath that is now in thee. Thou hadst not been on praying ground and pleading terms with God this day if it had not been for that dear suffering One. Scripture represents the gardener as only *asking* to have it spared; but Jesus Christ did something more than ask: he pleaded, not with his mouth only, but with pierced hands, and pierced feet, and pierced side; and those prevailing pleas have moved the heart of God, and you are yet spared. May I speak to thee then? If thy life had been spared, when thou wast condemned to die, by *my* intervention—suppose such a case—would you despise *me*? If I had power at the court, and, when you were condemned to die, had gone in and pleaded for you, and you had been reprieved, year after year would you hate me? would you speak against me? would you rail at my character? would you find fault with my friends? I know you better: you would love me; you

would be grateful for the sparing of your life. O sinner, I would you would treat the Lord Jesus as you would treat man. I would you would think of the Lord Jesus Christ as you would think of your fellow-man who had delivered you from death.

You are not in hell, where you would have been if He had not come in and pleaded for you. I do beseech you, think of the misery of lost souls, and recollect that *you* would have been in such a woful case yourself this day, if he had not lifted up that hand once pierced for human sin. There, there, where a drop of water is a boon too great to be received—there, where "For ever!" is written on the fire, and "For ever!" is printed on the chain, and "For ever! for ever! for ever!" rings out as the awful death-knell of everything like hope and rest—there you would have been this hour, this hour, if sparing grace had not prevented. Where are your companions—your old companions? When you were younger, you sinned with them; and they are lost, but you are not. Why this difference made? Why are they cast away, and you spared? To what can it be ascribed, but only to the gracious longsuffering of Jehovah?

Oh, I pray you look at Him who spared you, and weep and mourn for your sin. May the Spirit of God come down on you even now, and draw you to the foot of his dear cross. And as you see the blood which has spared *your* blood, and the death which has made you live until now, I tell you that God will forgive you: but you will never forgive yourselves for having stood out and resisted so long.

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THOMAS TOYE OF BELFAST.



THERE were twelve apostles, all fishers of men, yet each different from his fellow. There were twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the Jewish high priest, and not one the same in colour as the other. And so to this day, of all the labourers whom the Lord uses, you would perhaps not find any two alike in gifts, or working in the same manner.

Thomas Toye was born in Ireland, in the county of Cork, in 1801. When very young, his love to his mother began to be noticed. It continued

and strengthened as he grew up; and after his own conversion, at the age of seventeen, he took no rest till the Lord answered his prayers and owned his efforts in her being brought to Christ. Her mother, too, was converted by his means. In his case, faith first dwelt in Timothy, and then was communicated to Eunice and Lois.

It was on the 18th June 1818 that he knew for the first time "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." His distressed soul found rest while pondering Rom. viii. 1, "There is

therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ." From that day onward to his death, being assured of salvation himself, he never seemed weary of pressing it on others. A full, free, present, immediate salvation was his theme; and his simple argument was, that the Holy Ghost delighted to glorify the finished work of Christ. He would say, God knows of no to-morrow in the gospel. In his after ministry he liked to persuade inquirers to pray in his presence, that he might get a look into their hearts; and if one prayed, "O save me, Lord, save me now! I come to Thee just as I am," he would follow up the prayer with such a remark as this: "Now, what do you think He has done? Has He cast you out? Christ never said one thing, and did another."

Nothing remarkable is mentioned about his studying days. He had a great memory for dates in history; and this retentiveness of memory served him well afterwards in quoting Scripture chapter and verse.

For a time he worshipped in the Episcopal Church, but soon joined the Independents, among whom he became a minister in 1836, labouring at Clonakilly, and in the south of Ireland chiefly. Success attended his ministry; and all along there was about him a peculiarity of manner and address, with occasional eccentricity, that drew many to hear him who otherwise would not have attended. He had a fondness for similitudes drawn from trees, flowers, birds, insects, and applied these at times in a homely way, yet in a way seldom out of place. "In the evening hour," you might hear him say, "even the wild bee seeks its rest. Is there no poor, houseless, wandering sinner here to-night, willing to come into this rest in Jesus?" At another time: "I have heard that there are birds in America called *mocking-birds*. We would be of that species if we sang the Psalms of David without some degree of assurance—for instance,

'The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.'"

Once he spoke of the gospel as the same in all ages and dispensations: "Like the blue-bell, which has the same bright blossom as in days of yore, reflecting the hue of heaven on its bosom."

After some visits to Belfast, which were blest to many, he was induced to come and labour there in 1841. But it should have been noticed that about this time he joined the Presbyterian Synod, being entirely at one with that body in doctrine. He had his own way of illustrating truth and exposing error. Wishing to show the folly of ascribing to the sinner any share in converting his own soul, he one Sabbath asked, "What would you think of blind Bartimeus proposing to Jesus this manner of cure: 'Lord, if Thou wilt open one of my eyes, I will open the other!' No, no; the Lord does the whole work, and we get all the blessing."

In 1842 his church in *Great George's Street* was built. A lady in great spiritual darkness was brought into great light and joy while listening to him as he set forth a present salvation, and in the fulness of grateful joy began the contributions for the building, which became the birthplace of hundreds. His personal conversations with those who came were remarkably blessed. At other times the arrow pierced, the conscience bled, but the sinner resisted still. To one who said to him that she "was not afraid to die, for she did not feel she was a sinner," and who asked him to let her alone, and not speak of her danger, he said: "I am your best friend. Would you think any one your friend who would let you sleep on while he saw the bed on which you lay fast asleep was on fire?" But in vain. "I want none of your prayers. Begone!" was her angry reply. Another, a lady on her death-bed, asked if he really preached "that God put the rich and the poor in the same place hereafter; for if so, she could not enjoy heaven." "You need not," said he, "allow this thought to

trouble you, for in your present state you can never enter there."

One day he gave a tract to an orphan girl, who, on reaching Glasgow, discovered that she had lost her bag that contained her all. In a moment of despair she thought of plunging into the Clyde, when Mr. Toye's tract came to her mind. She took it out of her pocket to glance at it, and the words that met her eye were, "Stop, poor sinner, stop and think," etc. Awakened to care for her soul, she sought and found the Lord, and now lives to glorify Him.

He made much use of tracts. Some of his own were short, but very pointed, occasionally spiced with something peculiar in style or manner of appeal. Here was one, a leaflet, in verse :

"THE QUESTIONS OF A REVIVALIST.

When were you brought to God ?
When were your sins forgiven ?
And are you holy now,
And on the way to heaven ?"

A series of handbill tracts had such titles as the following : "The carte-de-visite of a sinner asleep in his sins ;" "The carte-de-visite of a nominal Christian ;" "The carte-de-visite of a man in the state of nature, of a man under the law, and of a man under grace." He had but one aim in all the methods he used, namely, to win souls ; for few men ever were more completely lifted above the desire of mere popularity. It was his single-mindedness, taking indeed an eccentric form, that led him to advertise that he would preach a sermon on "The Great Ship," that is, the Ark ; at another time, that he would say something about "the Comet," from which he passed to "the Star out of Jacob."

It was in the same earnest, we may say vehement, longing for souls, that he tried means to awaken men out of easy indifference, which other ministers could not see their way to approve. During times of revival, scenes occurred in his church which were misunderstood by those outside. A young

woman, in the joy of newly-found rest, stood up and declared that the Lord had blessed her, and simply added, "Come to Jesus." The effect that followed these unpremeditated words was as if an electric shock had passed through the congregation. And at the Lord's table one Sabbath, a woman long under bondage found her burden gone, and cried aloud, "Bless the Lord ! I have found the Pearl of great price." His church was frequented by persons of all denominations, even by Roman Catholics ; and ministers from other places—Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists (though not approving of all his methods)—often dropped in to hear, and witness the impression made on souls by the truth ; for Mr. Toye preached fully and simply the truth as it is in Jesus on all occasions. The last time he was able to conduct the service, a solemn scene occurred. No one expected it to be the last time he was to be among them, yet somehow it was observed that a singular stillness and awe rested on the congregation. Mr. Toye spoke of death and judgment, and then requested the people to *remain on their knees* while they sang, to the tune of the Old Hundred, a verse of a hymn which he gave out :

"Now I will tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found ;
Will point to His redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God."

When they had ceased singing, and all was silence, he said, "Now you have made a solemn promise to God on your knees, and it will meet you at the Judgment!" This was his last word to his people.

He could not forbear, wherever he went, pointing out to believers their right to full Assurance, and the duty of possessing it. He once said, "The great blessing which attended the revival in 1859 was, that it *unfurled the flag* of a present salvation, only the *fringes* of which were seen before. Oh this precious present salvation!" "I affirm we must first receive the

comforts of the gospel before we can fulfil the duties of the law. I am ready to cross bayonets with any one who denies this point, and I know I would conquer." One of the first sentences in his address on the subject at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Belfast in 1866 was: "I believe, that as the blue sea wave is the element of the sailor, assurance of salvation is the element of the follower of Christ. Had not Job assurance when he said chap. xix. 25? Had not David (Ps. xvii. 15)? Had not Isaiah assurance, yea, an assurance which ought to make modern Christians blush, when he said, "O Lord, I will praise Thee! Though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me"?"

If our space permitted, to tell some of his striking applications of the truth would have been very interesting. Preaching on "*Awake, thou that sleepest*," he closed in this manner:

"People often *talk in their sleep*. Sinners, in their sleep of sin, talk too.

"One says, 'I am too young to be religious.'

"Another, 'God is merciful.'

"Another, 'All have their faults.'

"Another, 'My sins are little sins.'

"Another, 'I have done no one harm but myself.'

"Another, 'Many good people are as bad as I.'

"Another, 'I will repent hereafter.'

"Oh that the Lord would speak with the voice that wakes the dead!"

There was always a cheerfulness, often playfulness, about this good man. At home, when he had got some fresh

idea on spiritual things, he would shout aloud in sheer delight. But when he heard of cases of conversion, his joy was quite rapturous; sometimes he literally leapt for joy. And it was said, when he prayed for the awakening and conversion of sinners, "he was so bathed in prayer at times, that it seemed as if he would continue all night."

He longed during the week for the return of the Sabbath, which he called "his market-day." When his beadle came to him on the Sabbath morning, he would say, in his own pleasant way, "Well, is the shop open? I wonder if we shall have a good market? At any rate, there won't be a soul, please God, but shall have an offer of the rarest, richest, most enduring blessing, and all without money and without price."

The inscription on the tablet erected after his decease in the church where he so long ministered, tells that "he fell asleep in Jesus, in full assurance of faith, May 15th, 1870;" and adds, "Brought in his 17th year to the knowledge of Christ." A sinner (as he loved to say) *saved by grace*, "he felt a pressing anxiety to bring others to the same Saviour." And then it sums up his labours in the city by applying to him that text in Acts xi. 24, "And much people was added to the Lord."

Who would not say that such a life as this was a life worth living? And, dear reader, why should not you live that same life? It was a simple life of faith upon the Son of God, of whom that man was able to say (having come to Him, and found himself received as the prodigal was), "He loved me, and gave Himself for me!"

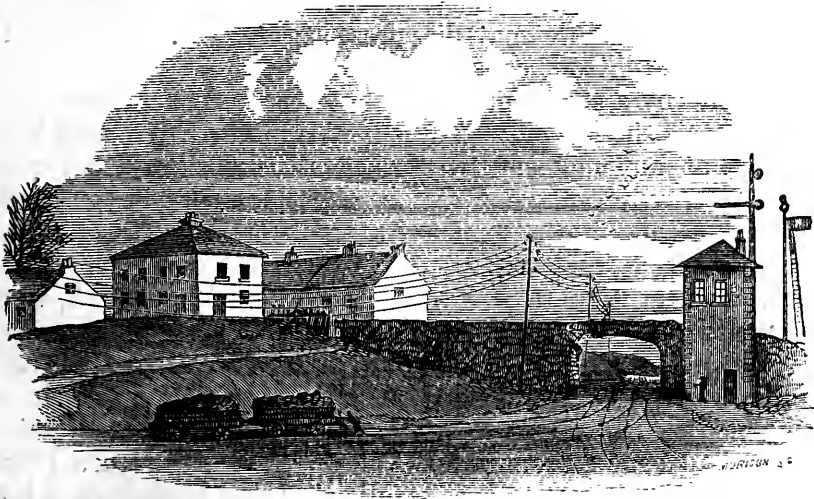
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1874.

THE RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT MANUEL.



Scene of the Accident.

LIKE the blast of a trumpet, a terrible event has made all Scotland listen. There has not been the like of it on a Scottish railway since the deadly collision in Winchburgh Tunnel—only five miles distant on the same line—in 1862.

On Tuesday morning, 27th January, the North British fast train for Larbert and the North left Edinburgh, as usual, at 6.35. At Manuel Station, the junction for Bo'ness, some mineral waggons from the Monkland line were moving eastward, in course of being shunted. Just when under Myrehead Bridge, the swift passenger train from

Edinburgh, with a frightful crash, dashed into collision. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," the spot became a scene of wreck, agony, and death. The front carriage was smashed into splinters,—tender and waggons being doubled upward with such a shock as to burst up the bridge overhead, the heavy copestones and roadway of which fell down upon the mass of ruin below.

The scene now presented was awful. The line was strewn with the living, the mangled and hurt, the dying and the dead. The cries of the sufferers were mingled with the lamentations of others over their friends, as one after another

these were recognised among the corpses or among the wounded. Coffins were in haste sent out from Edinburgh, into which the dead, just as they lay, were lifted and sent on to the signal-house at Polmont Station, on the floor of which ere long was laid a ghastly row of fifteen dead bodies. A heartrending scene followed, while during the afternoon friend after friend arrived and identified their loved ones, thus so suddenly and so terribly swept into eternity.

Whoever may be to blame for this appalling event, what a loud knock does it make at every heart! While in the vigour of health, men live on unprepared. Satan lulls them into security with the delusion that there is always a *deathbed* between them and death, wherein to prepare for eternity. What a lesson here, that we may die without a deathbed! God calls us by His Word, but by a stroke of His providence like this how loudly He warns us, that at any moment *there may be but a step between us and death!*

By this sad event, fifteen human beings—men, women, and children—were slain upon the spot. Two others have since died; and from the frightful injuries received, more may yet follow. Besides these, many have been maimed for life, while others, doubtless, have had a shock from which they will never recover,—not to speak of the desolation and mourning into which so many households have been thrown.

Among the dead was found the body of one who, on the Sabbath morning before the accident, was present at the Young Men's Fellowship Meeting of the congregation in Edinburgh (Mr. Moody Stuart's) with which he was connected. The chapter read was the twelfth of Luke, and the verse read by him in his turn was the thirty-fifth, "*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.*" How striking, in connection with what was at hand! "Found watching," he was a fruit of the labours in East Lothian, in

1850, of the late devoted David Sandeman, missionary to China.

Another death was that of Mr. John Ross, a faithful elder in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Thain Davidson, London. He was on his way to Tain to attend the funeral of his father. A stoker, who was killed, was working *his very last day* in the service of the Company, having had his passage taken out for New Zealand. Among the dead were also found a mother and her two children,—Mrs. Phimister, from near Fochabers, her little girl of five, and a little brother, only about two years of age.

A most solemn and instructive interest has been added to the event, from circumstances which have come to light relating to so many of the victims of it, in connection with the present great work of grace in Edinburgh.

A Christian woman from Banff, whose chief errand to Edinburgh had been to witness the work of God, was present at the noon prayer meeting on the Saturday preceding the accident. She was there met by the Rev. Mr. Wilson, Tolbooth Parish Church, who invited her to worship with him on the following day. She did so, his text being from the words, "Looking unto Jesus." Mr. Bruce of Banff was assisting Mr. Wilson, having to return home on the following day. She urged him to remain till the Tuesday morning, that they might travel together. He could not do so, but returned on the Monday. In parting with them, referring to Mr. Wilson's text, her last words were, "I wish, when I go home, to spend the rest of my days 'looking unto Jesus.'" She left by that fatal train on the Tuesday morning, and in less than an hour she was in eternity.

At a recent noon prayer meeting in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, the Rev. Mr. M'Murtrie of St. Bernard's Church gave the following particulars regarding another young sufferer, Miss Margaret Lindsay. She had been a pupil in the Moray House

Training College, and was returning to her home in Aberdeen :—

“When she came down to bid me good-bye before going away, I said to her, ‘May I tell about your change?’ She gave me permission; and now I feel as if I were sent here with a message to this great meeting. I was her minister from her infancy till I came to Edinburgh. It was in this hall she got her great blessing, less than a month ago. She was first impressed on the last night of the year. Some time afterwards I was at the noon meeting, and when I saw her face I knew in a moment that she was very happy. I said to her, ‘Perhaps you have been getting something that will be a blessing to you for many a day;’ and she just looked at me with her heart in her eyes, and said, ‘All my life.’ When she bade me good-bye, we parted with prayer, and I said, ‘What shall we ask?’ She said, ‘Ask that I may have more faith.’ We prayed for more faith, and that she might be stedfast; and I remember we prayed that, whether her life was to be long or short, she might serve the Lord to the end of her journey here, and then serve Him above.

“I may mention that the hymns seemed to have been particularly blessed to her. Every time I saw her latterly she had Mr. Sankey’s hymn-book in her hand. She was reading it in the train when the crash came. I saw that book last night at Manuel, stained with her blood. When her friends wanted her to sleep, and retired to the end of the bed out of sight, that she might think she was alone, she was overheard singing two hymns,—first, ‘Nothing either great or small,’ and then her favourite, at which there is the mark of a turned-down leaf in her book, ‘The Gate Ajar’—

“‘Oh, depths of mercy! can it be
That gate was left ajar for me?’

“One thing more. When we were

parting in Edinburgh, I said, ‘You remember what Mr. Moody said about working for Christ, and how it wasn’t good for the heart just to feed upon itself?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ she said, ‘I must work. I think I could distribute tracts when I go back to Aberdeen.’ I said, ‘Perhaps you could teach a class.’ ‘Yes,’ she said; ‘I have been thinking if there is a class vacant in the Sabbath school at home, I should like to get it.’ I added, ‘Do you remember what Mr. Moody said one day about the way to gain your relatives and companions,—not to be discontented when they don’t sympathize with you, but always to be loving, and gentle, and kind?’ ‘Oh yes,’ she said, ‘I am praying for that.’ And so she has passed away, with her heart full of the desire to work for Christ. She was only seventeen. Her Christian experience was but for one short month, but I never knew a happier or more decided Christian.”

Her injuries were of the most frightful kind; and all the more remarkable was the deep calm within, and her sweet testimony, in her last conscious moments, “Jesus is here.” She died on the Friday after the accident, in the upper room, facing the railway, of the house represented in the wood-cut.

Another among the sufferers was Miss Lydia Wilson, who was also dreadfully injured, and died in the adjoining cottage, on the evening of the day after the accident. Ten years before, she had been brought to Christ at Inverness, through the instrumentality of the lamented John Fraser. She was on her way to Inverness to spend a brief time with her father. Under the amputation of both limbs, which had seemed to give the only chance of life, she sank and died. The doctor who had attended her says that, amid all her sufferings, he had never witnessed so peaceful a death. Her only wish was, that the sad tidings should be made known as gently as possible to her father. She had, while in Edinburgh, attended many of the meetings,

and spoke of them as having been a great refreshing to her soul.

There was another young woman who was a fellow-traveller, on that fatal morning, in the same compartment with Margaret Lindsay and Lydia Wilson. Though severely injured, it is hoped she may ultimately recover. It is only in the humble hope that her remarkable case may prove useful to others that we are permitted to refer to it, as narrated by the Rev. J. H. Wilson, Barclay Church:—

“On Monday evening, 26th January, a young woman met me in the Assembly Hall staircase, and earnestly asked me to speak to her about her soul. On my saying that I was hurrying away to a meeting in the West Port, she replied, ‘I would like you much to speak to me. I am very anxious to be saved.’ I asked if I could not see her again. She said, ‘No; I have missed my train to-night, and must leave early to-morrow morning.’ I thereupon gave up my meeting, and spent half-an-hour with her in the ‘Ladies’ Room,’ opening up to her the way of salvation as best I could. She said she understood it, but still could not realize her own personal interest in Christ. After praying with her, I took her into the ‘Moderator’s Room,’ where three ladies were engaged in prayer. I told them how things were with her. One of them gave her the text, ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.’ She said, ‘*I see it all now.*’

“In the morning she left with the ill-fated train. After the collision had occurred, she was found among the wreck, suspended by her dress, head downward, over the bodies of two dead

men.* After being extricated she became unconscious, remembering nothing more till she found herself in bed in a neighbouring cottage.

“When I saw her on the Wednesday morning, much bruised about the chest and head, she was lying calm as a little child, in the sweet consciousness of being ‘safe in Jesus.’ Her brother remarked to me that it was so strange that she should have missed her train on Monday night *in order that she might be brought to Christ*, and then just on the following morning have passed through a kind of death. On the evening before the accident, while they were at tea, when about to leave for the train which she missed, he had asked her *whether she was a Christian?* Out of that question arose what followed on that—to her—eventful night.”

Did space permit, many more incidents might be mentioned. But surely those given, so full of interest, may well make the question ring in every ear, “*What does all this say to me?*” They may well make us think of our life,—how brief, how uncertain; of sudden death *in Christ*, leading to sudden glory,—of sudden death *out of Christ*, leading to eternal darkness and despair. Christ is willing, *waiting*, to save. Reader! if yet a stranger to Him, will you not accept of Him *here, and now*, even while you read this tract? “He that believeth on the Son *HATH* everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son *shall not see* life, but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.” (John iii. 36).

Reader! “How wilt *thou* do in the swelling of Jordan?”

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1874.

CONSOLATION IN CHRIST.



(See page 3.)

IN days of trouble, where is joy to be found? One of our godly forefathers, Samuel Rutherford, wrote to a friend, "Brother, I am comforted in my royal Prince and King. The world knoweth not our life; it is a mystery to them. Our weeping is above their laughing." And what had this man found? Was it wealth, or an estate, or a place of power, or great friends? No; but he had found in Christ Jesus all that his soul desired.

shall consolation be found?" With one voice they reply, "He has blessed us with everlasting consolation by giving us Christ." When, in his Epistle to the Philippians, Paul begins the second chapter with the words, "If there be any consolation in Christ," it no more expresses doubt than when we say, "If there be light in the sun, if there be heat in fire, if there be water in the sea, if there be sweetness in honey." For nothing is more certain than that Christ has consolation for a mourning world.

Let us ask of the apostles, and through them let us ask of God, "Where

When God presents Christ to us

under the name of "the Consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25), and when He tells us that Christ is anointed "to comfort all that mourn" (Isa. lxi. 3), He is taking for granted that sin has brought in pain, disease, suffering of all kinds, and made it a world that needs "consolation."

Are there not groans on every side? Is not death winning victims, and bearing off his prey on every side? Are you not yourself often made to weep over the tomb of some you loved as your own soul?—over a father, or mother, or sister, or brother, or child? Sin has done all this, and for all this you need "consolation." Look nearer. Look at your own soul; it is the mouldering ruin of what should have been a holy temple to the Lord. Your soul is full of self and sense, bent on fulfilling its own desires, forgetful of God. Nay, look closer, and you shall see in it *enmity* to God, and vile passions set on fire of hell—God's image wholly defaced. And see what is written on that soul above, "Thou shalt surely die!" and underneath, "Condemned already." Surely thou art a man to be pitied. If thou canst not or dost not weep for thyself, others weep for thee, and say that thou needest "consolation."

And "Consolation" is to be found "*in Christ*." He is sent by God to bring it to us sinners. As He sat on the mount, He opened His mouth and said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," all the while pointing to Himself. The well was near the thirsty; the thirsty were at the well. That generous and noble ruler of Israel, Nehemiah, has a name that means "*Jehovah's consolation*." It was he who left the palace, where he lived in ease, and wealth, and honour, that he might visit ruined Jerusalem and restore it. He came; and by night, by the light of moon and stars, he surveyed the desolations of Zion, going by the gate of the valley, and the Dragon-well, and the King's Pool, and thus compassing the walls till he took in the full

sadness of the mournful scene. And then he set his hand to rebuild, and restore, and beautify, and strengthen. Was he not, in a worthy sense, "Nehemiah," Jehovah's consolation? But he is no more than a faint type of Jesus, whom the Father has sent to "*comfort all that mourn*." Jesus is sent to remove the mourning of a sorrowing earth by bringing to it the remedy for guilt and sin. There is "*consolation in Christ*." There is in Christ, who died and is risen, all that may relieve the sinner's deepest anguish on account of his soul's guilt and corruption. There is in Christ what may lighten the heavy load of those that are grieving under bereavement or adversity of whatever kind.

When Paul wrote (Philipp. ii. 1), "If there be any consolation in Christ," how these words would fall upon the hearts of some to whom that epistle was read in Philippi! Their pastor Epaphroditus reads it aloud in the congregation, and you may see Lydia, the seller of purple, smiling, and the jailor's eye glistening with delight, as the words reach their ear, "If there be any consolation in Christ." Lydia could tell how, when at the river-side she was seeking in vain for rest to her weary soul, trying to pray herself into rest, Christ was set before her as her soul's peace; and how, from the moment when she saw that *Christ*, by His blood and obedience, had satisfied the law, and provided a righteousness for sinners, she found "*consolation in Christ*." And the jailor could speak of the terror and agony of his awakened soul, as he thought of the Judge at hand, and himself a criminal at the bar; and how Paul and Silas presented to his view Christ taking the place of the guilty, paying the debtor's debt, dying the sinner's death, that He might fulfil the sentence, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and yet save the sinner. It was then and thus that he found "*consolation in Christ*." And there is the same left for you, fellow-sinner and fellow-mourner. Come and

see. Are you willing that Christ should take your place, and be your sin-bearer and substitute? He engages simply on the understanding that you trust Him to undertake for you, and relieve you of every burden.

And if you be one whose sorrows are of a mingled sort,—disappointment, and sore bereavement, added to the deeper sorrow of a soul in tears over its guilt and corruption, and helplessness, and emptiness,—still, for you we have tidings of great joy. There is “*consolation in Christ*.” Who could attempt to number the millions of souls whom Christ has comforted? And He did it always by first wiping away their sin, and then wiping away their tears. He has by Himself purged their sin, and has put a new song into their mouth. You must behold that multitude described in Revelation vii. 9, as one “that no man could number,” out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, and you must get the blessed history of each one’s deliverance by washing in the blood of the Lamb, ere you can estimate how full and how real is the “*consolation in Christ*.”

At the beginning of His ministry, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Christ proclaimed that the Lord God had sent Him to “heal the broken-hearted.” What thousands of thousands of hearts, broken for sin, and broken for sorrow, hath He healed and made glad since then! Think of the Ethiopian (Acts viii. 39), when he had found Christ, how he went on his way rejoicing. Think of Stephen, when he stood before his enemies with his face like the face of an angel. Think of his bloody death! (Acts vi. 15.) Surrounded by his murderers, his body broken by the cruel stones, calmly as an infant in its mother’s arms he “fell asleep.” And what shall we say of the noble army of martyrs, who, since then, have counted not their lives dear unto them for Christ, so that they might finish their course with joy? Think of John Lambert, burnt at

Smithfield, who, when his legs were consumed, and his body raised up on the pikes of his tormentors, lifted his hands, his finger-ends flaming with fire, and cried with his dying breath, “None but Christ! none but Christ!” Think, reader, even of those whom you have yourself known, who, dying amid poverty, bereavement, persecution, suffering, have found in Christ a never-failing fountain of peace and joy. Many years ago, one stormy winter day, a minister was visiting one of his people, an old man, who lived in poverty in a lonely cottage a few miles from Jedburgh. He found him sitting with the Bible open upon his knees, but in outward circumstances of great discomfort—the snow drifting through the roof and under the door, and scarcely an ember of fire on the hearth. “What are you about to-day, John?” was Mr. Young’s question on entering. “Ah, sir,” said the happy saint, “*I am sitting under His shadow wth great delight*.” O wondrous “*consolation in Christ*!”—the river which, from the beginning of time to the end, “maketh glad the city of our God.”

But yet again, it is a fountain that has so many streams. Oh the blessedness of the perfect pardon and perfect peace which the “*consolation in Christ*” yields! But that is only the beginning of a thousandfold blessedness. Consider the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,—He is included in this “*consolation*,” with all His inward working, now and for ever. If you miss earthly friends, you get God Himself. “Mother,” said a young saint on his deathbed, “you need not weep; you will find *me* in the all-sufficiency of Christ.” The prospect of glory to be revealed is also here,—that glory which shall in one moment make a man forget that he ever had a sorrow, and which shall go on increasing in brightness for ever. All the gifts, all the manifestations of Godhead love and grace, are contained in the “*consolation in Christ*.” Surely this is “*Consolation*.”

Now, fellow-sinner and fellow-

mourner, let us remind thee that the "consolation" is found on *this* side of the judgment-seat. It is first found in *this* world, or never found at all. Wouldst thou not be comforted, comforted for ever?—be so consoled that thou couldst never more be overwhelmed? Then see how God relieves the soul's anxieties, by revealing Himself to us at the cross of Christ. Or wilt thou go on wiping off thy tears thyself as thou best canst, and then plunge into a dark eternity, and meet a rejected Saviour, and hear the voice of "weeping and wailing," and thyself begin to weep and wail with the everlasting mourners in the gloom of hell? Wilt thou be content that Christ should point to some of thy companions, who heard of "*consolation in Him*," found it out, began here to enjoy it, and then went to possess it in its fulness, whilst thou art wringing thy hands in remorse and despair? Wilt thou not be made a tenfold more inconsolable mourner for ever, when the words pierce thee to the heart, "Now he is comforted, and *thou art tormented?*" (Luke xvi. 25.)

Remember, O fellow-sinner and fellow-mourner, you were shown that there was "*consolation in Christ*," and that the consolation was as free to men as the light of the sun. For who ever heard of Christ turning away from any sinner that sought Him, even when that sinner was writhing under the anguish of the longest lifetime's most obstinate rebellion? If you are carried to your grave in this unbelieving condition, still sullenly slighting this consolation, then you have destroyed yourself, and the weapon is thrust into your soul by

your own hand. Your unbelief has stabbed you to the heart. A writer of Spanish history tells that the body of Alonzo de Aquilar, after having mouldered away to a skeleton, was laid open to view in its tomb by one of his descendants, and deep buried among the bones was found the iron head of the spear that had wounded him unto death. That iron head in your case is *unbelief*, your rejection of this testimony to the consolation in Christ. And when years have rolled on, and you are weeping and wailing still, this deadly weapon shall be in your spirit still. Your rejection of the "consolation" shall be a never-dying worm, deep buried in your most miserable and most guilty soul.

Reader, if you be yet without Christ, what do you say? Your last joy, your last song, your last fool's laugh will soon come. Your last "drop of water" will soon be tasted. How many worlds would you then give to have the favour of the Judge! Will you not this day believe the Lord's testimony (which thousands upon thousands of every nation and tongue have found to be true), that every mourning one in the wide world has an invitation, a pressing invitation, a call, an earnest call, a most sure welcome, and a most undoubted warrant, to use now, and enjoy for ever, "*Consolation in Christ?*" Take now "the gift of God," Christ, who, as the just in the room of the unjust, will appear in the presence of God for you; and your song shall be, "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." (Isa. xii. 1.)

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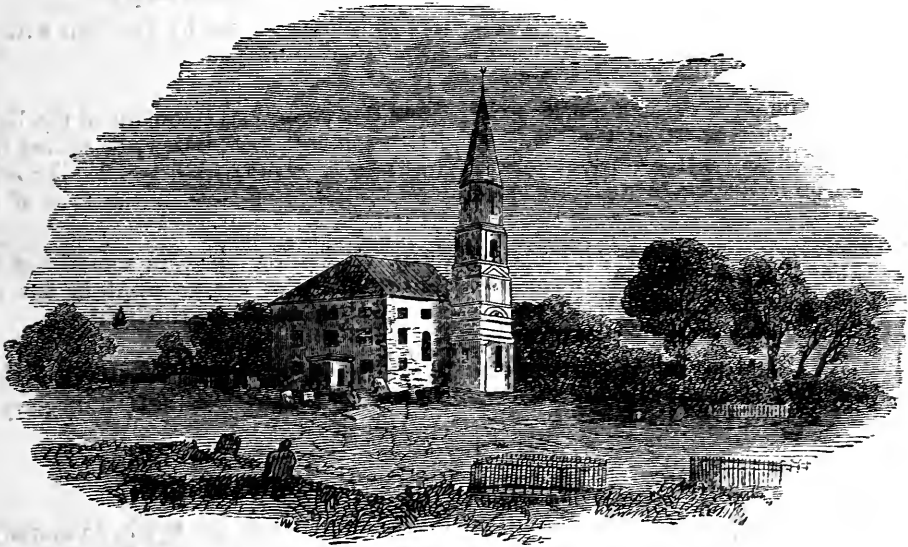
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1874.

THE GREAT GULF BETWEEN.

(LUKE XVI. 26.)



ELIZABETH D—— had for twelve years attended a Bible class in Edinburgh. In her station as a domestic servant, she had long made it manifest, by a humble, consistent, faithful life, that she was a child of God. With the word of Christ dwelling in her richly, and led and sustained by the Spirit to the last, she had a quiet and peaceful deathbed. Some years ago, on a bright summer afternoon, we helped to lay her remains in the grave, in Inveresk churchyard, near Musselburgh.

From the time of her conversion,

Elizabeth was earnest for the souls of her kindred and companions. For a beloved sister especially, a class-fellow, and also a servant in Edinburgh, she ceased not to watch and pray. She used often to speak to her about her soul. If C—— was hindered from getting to the class, she used to write to her about the lesson, and in every way tried to do her good. It pleased God to awaken that sister, and to bring her to Christ. When brought to peace in believing, C—— was very happy. Elizabeth rejoiced over her,

though yet with trembling. One day she put into C——'s hands a slip of paper on which were written, in pencil, the following words:—

"I am a witness that this is to thee a time of first love. May I never have to witness against thee that thou hast left thy first love."

Not long before Elizabeth's death, there was a lesson one Sabbath evening in the class about the rich man and Lazarus. Her teacher spoke of the "great gulf" between the lost and the saved, and said that there was as real and as great a gulf even *now*, in this life, between the soul in Christ

and the soul out of Christ, though it was not yet a "great gulf" *fixed*. He then gave out a written exercise to prove this from the Bible; texts were to be given, telling of the *two sides of the gulf*, under each of these three heads:—1. The "great gulf" *—in time*. 2. How may I know on which side of the gulf I am? 3. The "great gulf" *fixed—in eternity*.

The first Sabbath after Elizabeth was buried, her teacher read to the class the exercise which Elizabeth had given in on the above subject. It seemed to her companions like a voice from the eternal world. It was as follows:—

The "Great Gulf" between,—in time.

The one side.

1 Pet. ii. 10.—Which in time past were not a people.

Which had not obtained mercy.

John xiv. 17.—Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.

2 Cor. iv. 4.—The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Eph. iv. 18.—Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.

Psalm cxix. 155.—Salvation is far from the wicked, for they seek not thy statutes.

The other side.

But are now the people of God.

But now have obtained mercy.

But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Verse 6.—God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Chap. v. 8.—For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light.

Psalm lxxxv. 9.—Surely his salvation is nigh unto them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.

How may I know on which side I am?

Rom. viii. 13.—If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

John iii. 20.—For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

John xv. 19.—If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.

But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Verse 21.—But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

But because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

The "Great Gulf" fixed,—in eternity.

Matt. xxv. 41.—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Verse 46.—These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Rev. xxii. 11.—He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.

Verse 34.—Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.

But the righteous into life eternal.

And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Mark ix. 44.—Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Rev. xiv. 13.—I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus had reference not to the state of the soul *in time*, but to the state of the soul *in eternity*. When the rich man cried out in torments, between him and Lazarus there was a great gulf. But, as is vividly brought out in the first division of the foregoing exercise, there was a great gulf between them *before* they died no less truly than *after*. O reader! is there not as real, as great a gulf *now*, between those who are *in Christ* and those who are *in their sins*? And how great, how real, how momentous the difference! It is as great as the difference between life and death, between light and darkness, between heaven and hell,—between being “accepted in the Beloved,” and having the wrath of God abiding on us.

And remember, reader, this is a *present* matter. You are *now, already*, while you read this tract, either on the one side or on the other. If we ask you, Are you lost or saved? do you answer, “I cannot be sure”? Reader! do you *wish* to be sure? Or is your answer only an attempt to get away from the question? or a vain, delusive hope that there is some middle ground on which you may be standing,—neither so committed to holiness as if you were saved, nor so hopeless and miserable as if you were lost? Dear fellow-sinner, can you find any sober ground, in Scripture or in common sense, for such a delusion as this? Can a man at the same time be both lost and saved? both living and dead? both pardoned and condemned? It will not do. Does not conscience tell you it will not do? Surely you are feeding on ashes, and a deceived heart has turned you aside. Surely there is a lie in your right hand.

Reader! let us affectionately, yet solemnly and earnestly, press this question upon you. There is a great

gulf, in this present life, between the state of the lost and the state of the saved; between those who are only born of the flesh, and those who have been born again; between those who have never had one sin forgiven them, and those who in Christ have found redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. *Upon which side of that gulf* are you this moment standing?

You may say that you are as good as your neighbours, and it may be true. You may be free from open or flagrant sin. It may be true that no one ever saw you drunk, or heard you swear, or knew of you doing a dishonest thing in business, or of your telling a lie. But that is not the question. The question is, *On which side of the gulf* are you standing?

You may be a dutiful son or daughter, an affectionate husband or wife, a kind father or mother. You may be counted a pattern in all the relations of life. In great measure that may be true. But that is not the question. The question is, *On which side of the gulf* are you standing?

You may be a regular attender in the house of God. You may go to every prayer meeting that is within your reach. You may have been admitted to the Lord’s table,—the minister may have said he was satisfied with all your answers, and was glad to admit you; you may be very serious for a week before and a week after each returning communion season; you may regularly have family worship, and catechise your children and servants, if you have them. You may do all this. But this is not the question. The question is, *On which side of the gulf* are you standing?

You may be personally blameless. You may be a regular subscriber to religious societies. You may show an interest in the good-doing of others.

You may be a Sabbath-school teacher, beloved by your scholars, and able to interest and attract them; you may be a tract distributor, and be regarded by many as a zealous, remarkable Christian. You may be, and do, all this. But this is not the question. The question is, *On which side of the gulf are you standing?*

Once more. You may have felt your guilt as a sinner. You may now be very different from what you once were. You may have "trembled" and begun to do many things. You may have sometimes wept—yes, *wept* for your sins; you may read the Bible regularly, and regularly pray, and often *wish* to be saved. You may do all this, and many things more of the same kind. But this is not the question. The great question is, *On which side of the gulf are you standing?*

Dear fellow-sinner, think not the question a hard saying. If you be in earnest, we believe you will be thankful for it. You may *be* all this, you may be *doing* all this, and yet there may be a secret between your soul and the God who knows you,—this, namely, that you have never given Him your *heart*. Once more we affectionately ask, *On which side of the gulf are you standing?* In other words, Are you yet *in your sins*, or are you *in Christ*? Have you given yourself up, as a poor, lost sinner, to Him as your Prophet, Priest, and King; to be taught by His word and Spirit, to be pardoned and saved by His blood, to be guided and ruled, as a loving disciple, by His will and authority in all things?

Do you ask, "If I yet be out of

Christ, is there no difference between my state and that of the rich man in the parable?" Yes, there is a difference. Between you and a true child of God there is as great a gulf, as real a separation, as between the rich man and Lazarus in eternity. The great gulf is *there*. But, blessed be God! it is not yet a great gulf *fixed*. That gulf may be crossed, may be crossed by *you*, may be crossed now. Do you ask, "How may I pass from the side of the lost to the side of the saved? Tell me the way." Hear, O fellow-sinner, the Saviour's voice calling still, "I AM THE WAY, and the Truth, and the Life." (John xiv. 6.) "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is *passed from death unto life*." (John v. 24.)

Reader! another warning has come to you. Perhaps it may be the last. Shall it be in vain? You have lived to see a year of the right hand of the Most High. Thousands in all parts of the land have since this year began been passing over that gulf,—have been passing from death to life, from sin to Christ, from the darkness of the lost to the light and peace of the saved. May the Spirit cause these things to sink into your heart. Soon the great gulf *now* will be the great gulf *fixed for ever*. Blessed are they—and will *you* not share their blessedness?—who have passed over, who even now have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. How diligent and watchful, yet how calm and happy, in the light and love of God, ought not their life to be!

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1874.

WHAT IS YOUR HOPE?

"Good hope through grace."—2 THESS. ii. 16.



See page 2.

"I HOPE" is a very common expression. Everybody can say, "I hope." On no subject is the expression used so commonly as it is about religion. Men turn off some home-thrust at conscience by this convenient form of words, "I hope."—"I hope it will be all right at last."—"I hope I shall be a better man some day."—"I hope we shall all get to heaven." But why do they hope? On what is their hope built? Too often they cannot tell you. Too often it is a mere excuse for avoiding a disagreeable subject.

Reader, I ask you,—Have you a hope that your sins are pardoned, your heart renewed, and your soul at peace with God? Then see to it that your hope is "good," and "lively," and one that "maketh not ashamed." Shrink not from honest inquiry into the condition of your soul. If your

hope is good, examination will do it no harm. If your hope is bad, it is high time to know it, and seek a better.

There are five marks of a "good hope."

1. A good hope is *a hope that a man can explain*. What saith the Scripture? "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." (1 Pet. iii. 15.)

If your hope is sound, you must be able to give some account of it. You must be able to show why, and wherefore, and on what grounds, and for what reason, you expect to go to heaven when you die. Now can you do this? I do not say that deep learning and great knowledge are needful to salvation; but I cannot believe that a man has got a thing, if he knows nothing about it.

2. A good hope is *a hope that is drawn from Scripture*. What says David? "I hope in Thy word." "Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope."

If your hope is sound, you ought to be able to turn to some text, or fact, or doctrine of God's word, as the source of it. Your confidence must arise from something that God has said in His Bible, and that your heart has received and believed.

It is not enough to have good feelings about the state of our souls. We may flatter ourselves that all is right, and that we are going to heaven when we die, and yet have nothing to show for our reason but mere fancy and imagination. "The heart is deceitful above all things." "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." Good feelings without Scripture do not make up a good hope.

It is not enough to have the good opinion of others about the state of our souls. We may be told by others on our deathbeds, to "keep up our spirits" and "not to be afraid." We may be reminded that we have lived good lives, and had a good heart, and

done nobody any harm, and not been so bad as many. And all this time our friends may not bring forward a word of Scripture, and may be feeding us on poison. Such friends are miserable comforters. However well-meaning, they are downright enemies to our souls. The good opinion of others, without the warrant of God's word, will never make up a good hope.

Reader, would you know the soundness of your own hope? Then search and look within your heart for some text, or doctrine, or fact out of God's book. There will always be some one or more on which your soul hangs, if you are a true child of God. The dying thief in London, who was visited by a city missionary, and found utterly ignorant of Christianity, laid hold on one single fact in the gospel, and found comfort in it. That fact was the story of the penitent thief. "Sir," he said, when visited the second time, "are there any more thieves in that book from which you read yesterday?" The poor Hindoo, who first heard the gospel from a missionary on a roadside, grasped one single text in the First Epistle of St. John, and found in it peace. That text was the precious saying, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Such is the experience of all true Christians. Unlearned, humble, poor as many of them are, they have got hold of something in the Bible, and this causes them to hope.

3. A good hope is *a hope that rests entirely on Jesus Christ*. What says St. Paul to Timothy? He says that Jesus Christ "is our hope." What says he to the Colossians? He speaks of "Christ in you the hope of glory." (1 Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27.)

The man who has a good hope founds all his expectations of pardon and glory, on the mediation of Jesus the Son of God. He knows his own sinfulness. He feels that he is guilty, wicked, and lost by nature. But he sees forgiveness and peace with God offered freely to him through faith in Christ. He accepts the offer. He

casts himself with all his sins on Jesus, and rests on Him. Jesus and His atonement on the cross,—Jesus and His righteousness,—Jesus and His finished work,—Jesus and His all-prevailing intercession,—Jesus, and Jesus only, is the foundation of the confidence of his soul.

Reader, beware of supposing that any hope is good which is not founded on Christ. All other hopes are built on sand. They may look well in the summer time of health and prosperity, but will fail in the day of sickness and the hour of death. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

Church-membership is no foundation of hope. We may belong to the best of churches, and yet never belong to Christ. Receiving the sacraments is no foundation of hope. Miserable indeed is our condition, if we can say nothing more than this. Christ Himself is the only true foundation of a good hope. He that buildeth on Him shall not be confounded. (1 Pet. ii. 6.) This is the point on which all true saints in every age have been entirely agreed. Differing on other matters, they have been of one mind upon this. Christ has been all their confidence. They have hoped in Him, and not been ashamed.

4. A good hope is *a hope that is felt inwardly in the heart*. What says St. Paul? He speaks of "hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." He speaks of "rejoicing in hope." (Rom. v. 5, xii. 12.)

The man who has a good hope is conscious of it. He feels within him something that another man does not. He is conscious of possessing a well-grounded expectation of good things to come. That consciousness may vary exceedingly in different persons. In one it is strong and well-defined; in another it is feeble and indistinct. But in all persons who have a good hope, in a greater or less degree, this consciousness does exist.

Can a weary man lie down in bed, and not feel rested? Can the parched traveller in an African desert drink water, and not feel refreshed? I cannot believe it. I believe that in each case something will be felt. Just so I cannot believe that a man can be a true Christian, if he does not feel *something* within. A new birth, a pardon of sins, a conscience sprinkled with Christ's blood, an indwelling of the Holy Ghost, are no such small matters as men seem to suppose. He that knows anything of them will feel them. Talk as men will about enthusiasm and excitement, there are such things as *feelings* in religion. The Christian who knows nothing of them is not yet converted, and has everything to learn. The good hope is a hope that can be felt.

5. In the last place, a good hope is *a hope that is manifested outwardly in the life*. Once more, what saith the Scripture? "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

The man that has a good hope will show it in all his ways. It will influence his life, his character, and his daily conduct. It will make him strive to be a holy, godly, conscientious, spiritual man. He will feel, "I am bought with a price, let me glorify God with body and spirit, which are His." Let me prove that I am Christ's friend, by keeping His commandments. (1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 9; John xv. 14.)

There are some who persuade themselves that they were once called and chosen of God to salvation. They take it for granted that there was once a real work of the Spirit on their hearts, and that all, therefore, must be well. And yet these very people can lie, and cheat, and swindle, and be dishonourable! Some of them can even get drunk in private, and secretly commit sins of which it is a shame to speak! And have they a good hope? Let those believe it who will, I cannot.

There are some in this day who fancy they have a good hope, because

they like hearing the gospel. They are fond of hearing good sermons. They will go miles to listen to some favourite preacher. They will even weep and be much affected by his words. And yet these very people can plunge into every folly and gaiety of the world. Night after night they can go with their whole heart to the opera, the theatre, or the ball. Their voice on Sunday is the voice of Jacob, but their hands on week-days are the hands of Esau. And have these people a good hope? I dare not say so. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

Reader! suffer me now to apply the whole subject to your conscience.

1. What is your own hope about your soul?

I do not want to know whether you go to church or to chapel. I do not want to know whether you approve of the gospel, and think it very right and proper that people should have their religion, and say their prayers. All this is beside the mark. It is not the point. The point I want you to look at is this, "What is *your* hope about *your own* soul?"

It matters nothing what your relations think. It matters nothing what the rest of the parish or town approve. The account of God will not be taken by towns, or by parishes, or by families. Each must stand forth separately and answer for himself. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 12.) And what is the defence you mean to set up? What is to be your plea? "What is your hope about your soul?"

Reader, I entreat you to consider calmly what your hope really is. I entreat you not to be content with saying, like the parrot, "I hope—I hope—I hope," but to examine seriously into the nature of your confidence, and to make sure work that it is well founded. Is it a hope you can explain? Is it scriptural? Is it built on Christ? Is it felt in your heart? Is it sanctifying to your life? All is not gold that glitters. I have warned you already that there is a false hope as well as a true. Beware of mistakes.

2. A good hope is within the reach of any man, if he is only willing to seek it. It is freely offered, even as it was freely purchased. It may be freely obtained, "without money and without price." Our past lives do not make it impossible to obtain it, however bad they may have been. The same grace which provided mankind with a hope, makes a free, full, and unlimited invitation: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." (Rev. xxii. 17; Matt. vi. 7.)

If you have a good hope, *be jealous and watchful over it*. Beware that Satan does not steal it away for a season, as he did from David and Peter. Beware that you do not lose sight of it by giving way to inconsistencies, and by conformity to the world. Keep it bright by daily carefulness over your temper, thoughts, and words. Keep it healthy by hearty, fervent, and continual prayer.

REV. J. C. RYLE.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1874.

GERALDINE HOOPER.



THERE can be nothing richer than the blessing of a man who is ripe both in years and piety. One day while William Jay, the famous preacher of Bath, was feeding poultry in his garden, he noticed a bright little girl looking at his work with great interest through the palings. He was then about eighty years of age, and a touch of nature soon brought the two extremes of old man and little child together. He asked the child to come in, was greatly pleased with her grace

and sprightliness, talked kindly with her for some time, and on parting, laid his hand on her head and blessed her, saying, "*The blessing of the Lord rest on thee, my child, and make thee a blessing.*" We are told she was awed by his words, and in after life used to say, "I felt for a long time that I had been blessed by an aged and holy man of God, and *I expected to be blessed in consequence.*"

This child's name was Geraldine Hooper, and it is striking to know

that ere her brief life closed, she preached Christ near 4000 times, to the saving of multitudes.

We cannot express approval of female preaching,—as little can we help acknowledging God's blessing on it in this particular case. In this tract, our aim is simply to diffuse more fully, in all persons, the *spirit* of this noble woman; for then, we are sure, the ordinary preaching would have more power given it, and be crowned with greater success.

She was born at Paris, of English parents, 30th March, 1841. In early life she gave promise of shining with uncommon lustre in society. She had all those qualities of body and mind that make one a favourite with the fashionable: was warm-hearted, gay, witty, full of life and grace, of literary taste, an excellent dancer, and sang with surpassing sweetness and power. At seventeen, she is described as having been much like other young ladies of the same age,—fond of balls, soirees, theatres, operas, in the evening, and spending the day in novel-reading, morning calls, shopping, and dressing.

But God had designed her to shine in a more excellent way. He kept her very much on the same candlestick, only the bright light was made new.

The occasion of the change was the sudden death of the lady who introduced her to society. By this event her young heart was crushed, and left utterly desolate. God was making room for Himself there. Her former pleasures lost their sweet taste, and the whole world ceased in any way to charm her. She resolved to become religious, and began—as anxious souls sometimes do—to make herself a Christian. The resolution was good; but the way in which at first she acted on it made her religious state no better. She began zealously to go through the routine of Bible-reading and praying, and “would often rise at three o'clock in the morning, and resort to the garden in the month of December, thinking that prayers said at such a cost

would surely gain her admittance into heaven.”

Her distress of mind increased; thick darkness fell upon her soul. The attempts she made to become pleasing to God by her own righteousness, only made the burden of sin upon her conscience heavier.

At length, on a communion Sabbath, in church, light and peace came. Referring to herself, she speaks of the occasion in these words: “With trembling eagerness she listened for the text. It was announced. ‘*This man receiveth sinners.*’ O joyous news! Was it true? Then she might come. Was it true? Then she might be saved. *Was it true?* Then she would be received. She heard no more; she wanted nothing more. The burden was gone, the darkness was past, the void filled, and peace found.”

The joy of the Lord being now her strength, she began at once to exercise it. That week she was led to visit a poor man dying miserably in a wretched house in a low locality of the city. Approaching him, she said, “You want something; what is it?” “*Mercy,*” was the reply. She said, “This man receiveth sinners.” “Where is that?” he asked eagerly. “In God's word;” and then she gently told him the story of her own conversion. Some weeks after, his last words were, “Bless you for coming to see me! ‘*This man receiveth sinners.*’”

Faithful in little, the Lord began to entrust her with much, and she was led into ways and works of usefulness beyond her own choice, and far beyond any one's expectations. In Avon Street, Bath, she held, at six o'clock in the morning, a prayer meeting, which she called family worship, for the poor before they went to their day's work. Touched with compassion for the wretched whom she saw in her walks up Holloway, she took a small kitchen there, and held a gospel meeting, where the disclosure of her powers startled even her most intimate friends. The place was soon filled to overflowing. The meeting was then held in

the Temperance Hall, from which it was again crowded out into a still larger room.

For more than ten years Miss Hooper preached in Bath, and was as well known as any minister in the city. At first, novelty drew crowds; but when her ministry was no novelty, the crowds came together in even larger numbers, and with increased interest. They felt a blessing in it, and could not stay away.

This, too, was her only apology for taking so public a position. She did not choose it. She was irresistibly led into it. Her womanliness held back, but the love of Christ constrained her at the call of multitudes of anxious souls, whom it appeared she had the power of reaching better than any one else. She took one faithful step modestly; God led her and helped her to take another, and another, until in His service she was a famous public preacher; yet still doing His work with as much humility and modesty as at the first.

In preaching she had wonderful power, especially over working men. One man, who had not been in a place of worship for about seventeen years, and was induced to be present at a tea meeting in London while she was there, had his heart melted by her manner of repeating the verse:

“Oh do not let the Word depart,
Nor close thine eyes against the light;
Poor sinner, harden not thine heart,—
Thou would'st be saved—why not
to-night?”

“As she repeated the last line, I burst into tears,” he says, “and cried, ‘O my God, I am a poor sinner; I will not harden my heart if Thou wilt but save me! O my God, I want to be saved; but I don’t know how!’ This man lived to be a town missionary, and to say, ‘Now I have no desire but to live and die for the dear Redeemer. I often think of Miss Hooper’s earnestness; she spoke *as if everything she spoke was real*; that’s what won souls.’”

She had a great deal of humour, wonderful presence of mind, and always

a ready and pointed utterance. Her courage seemed never to fail, though often tested very severely. Whether standing on a waggon in some country district, with 1000 people around her, ankle-deep in snow, or addressing more than twice that number in St. James’s Hall, Plymouth, this gentle woman bore herself unflinchingly as Christ’s ambassador.

She could readily move her audience either to smile or weep, and could with great skill take advantage of any passing occurrence. But “Jesus only” occupied everything she did. One day, whilst addressing a crowd in the street, a policeman told her she must move on. In an instant she was offering him a share of her hymn-book, and had enlisted him to help her in the singing, and to keep order during the rest of the service.

In a crowd, a man once cried out to her insultingly, “Miss Hooper, you’re cracked to go on like this.” She turned quickly, and looking kindly and brightly on him, said, “Well, every nut must be cracked before you can get at the kernel, must it not?”

On another occasion, when a rude publican had thrown a lot of water on the place where she was to stand, she thanked him in the most graceful manner for his kindness in laying the dust, and apparently won the man’s heart; for shortly after, when there was affliction in his family, he would have none but the “lady preacher” to give attendance.

The secret of her power was the unction of the Spirit. This made many a common text come with irresistible power to her hearers. At the dying bed of an unhappy woman to whom no one could give comfort, she repeated the passage, “Ho, every one that thirsteth,” and the words “*without money and without price*” she said slowly three times over, with immediate and blessed effect on the poor woman’s distressed mind.

Once she thrilled her audience by telling them the story of a person who,

on a visit to a lunatic asylum, was assailed by a strong inmate of the house, and commanded to jump down from a high balcony where he was standing. The gentleman, with great presence of mind, said, "Jump down! oh, anybody can do that; but come with me, and I'll show you a trick." He then took the insane man down to the gravel walk, and telling him to *jump up*, left him trying his best to do so. "Doing his best? yes," said she, "and that's just what some of you are doing. It is easy to jump down into sin and hell—*try and jump up the other way*; and if you can't succeed, even after doing your best, ask the Lord to lift you up."

One day to a clergyman, who wore a face of icy coldness, she said, "Are you *really* looking for the speedy coming of Christ?" "Certainly; why do you doubt it?" "Because you *look* much more as if you were expecting Antichrist, or Satan himself." She said this with too much grace to give offence, and the ice was thawed.

After her marriage to Mr. Dening, she regulated her household affairs with the same skill and Christian kindness that characterized her public labours. In the most genial way she imbued her domestics with the spirit of the little girl, of whom she used to speak, who when asked how she knew she was converted, replied, "Well, for one thing, *I always sweep under the mats now*, and I never used to before."

During her brief married life she continued to work publicly for her beloved Master. "She spake of Him" wherever she felt a call to do so, and the common people heard her gladly.

The ardour of her zeal often led her to unsafe exposure; and from the effects of a neglected cold she died, 12th August, 1872, aged 31.

This remarkable woman carried revival blessings with her wherever she went. In her Lord's hand she turned many to righteousness. Her path of Christian usefulness was a peculiar one, and none who know how richly it was blessed will say it was an imprudent one. Had you asked the poor widow if it was prudent to cast in all her living to the treasury, she would likely have closed the argument by saying that she could not help it. Geraldine Hooper could as little help speaking of Jesus in the way she did.

Will none be led to copy her example in so far as referred to in this testimony of a poor woman, "La! ma'am, she used to come in and sit down in my poor place like as if she was my sister; there wer'n't *not one bit o' pride in her*. I did love her, tho' she was a lady, like one o' my own?"

Reader, listen to her yet speaking from the dead: "Oh, I beseech you, I entreat you, come to Christ! Come now! He stands with outstretched arms ready to receive you! Oh, poor sinner! Jesus loves you. Oh! why do you not love Him? But dear, dear sinner! if you *will* reject the Saviour, if you *will* continue in sin and set Him at nought, I tell you that Jesus will be glorified in you still; if He is not glorified in your salvation, He will be *in your destruction*. Oh sinner, sinner! once more I point thee to a loving, bleeding, dying Saviour. Come to Him now, and thou shalt reign with Him in glory!" Amen.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

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"BETWEEN TWO WORLDS."



IN September 1863, the writer and his son, a youth of seventeen, then in an educational establishment near Geneva, resolved to make the tour round Mont Blanc on foot. The first day they reached Contamines, where they slept. Next morning they engaged a guide, who undertook to conduct them safely to Mottet, a small hamlet, between which and Contamines there was a lofty ridge of cliffs. The guide suggested that by ascending the chain of cliffs by a path which he knew, the journey to

Mottet would be shortened by two or three hours.

The way towards the cliffs was rugged and painful, and the ascent up the face of the rocks was attended with great difficulty and danger. Having, however, once entered upon it, so steep and rugged were the cliffs that to return seemed nearly impossible, there being no safe footing for the travellers, and nothing on which they could lay hold. At last, after much anxiety, they reached the summit in

safety, and found themselves upon a firm and nearly level shelf of rock, about fifteen feet in width. When, however, they looked down on the side by which they had expected to descend, they saw nothing in any direction but a steep and frightful precipice, which appeared to render descent impossible. It was indeed a solemn moment, rendered all the more so by the guide telling them that he had mistaken the way, and by his running along the ledge in both directions in a state bordering upon distraction, in what appeared to be a vain and hopeless attempt to find a way of escape.

It was a glorious day, and the prospect around on every side, of rocky mountains bathed in the hues of the calm, bright sunshine, was surpassingly magnificent; but the tourists were too completely absorbed by their peril to regard it with interest. For the time they felt themselves entirely shut out from everything on earth; and their sense of loneliness and danger was greatly heightened by observing that the sun was fast descending to the west, and that very soon they would be left in total darkness. Besides, they were entirely unprovided with additional clothing, to defend them against the extreme cold which always prevails on mountain elevations after sunset, and they were nearly destitute of food. There seemed nothing before them but a lingering death from cold and starvation—unless, indeed, the end were accelerated by their falling over the lofty precipices on either side. Thus they stood, as it were, between the two worlds of time and eternity—on the extreme verge of the world of probation, and with only a single step between them and the world of everlasting doom.

At last, however, in God's great mercy, there came a gleam of hope. Their guide, who had once more left them in a state of great alarm, returned, after an interval of perhaps a quarter of an hour. "Gentlemen," said he,

"follow me; I think we may be able to descend."

He then led them to a hollow or gully in the mountain, excessively steep, and filled with an immense mass of stones, of all shapes and sizes. The descent was most perilous, for at first it was almost perpendicular. It was, however, their only chance of life, and they were encouraged to attempt it.

After they had got down about fifty feet, their progress was arrested. They found themselves on another accumulation of loose rocks and stones, along the steep and moving sides of which, with much difficulty, and not without danger, they descended to the valley below. This, in God's good providence, they reached, greatly exhausted, but in perfect safety.

The travellers, whose narrow escape from death we have thus described, might have assumed, before starting, that they would be exposed to greater risks than if they had remained at home. But who does not know that life is always uncertain, and that nowhere can any man say with confidence, "I am beyond the reach of harm"? Safe as railway travelling is for the most part,—and now-a-days almost everybody travels more or less by rail,—accidents do from time to time occur which are terribly destructive and fatal. And other dangers surround and hang over us day after day. While the writer was preparing these pages, he saw in the newspapers accounts of a thunderstorm which had swept over a large extent of country, in the course of which four persons were instantaneously killed by the lightning under very different circumstances. One was a steersman, in his boat at sea; another a countryman, at work in the field; the third a servant girl, in her master's house, in the very act of rushing from her bedroom to seek a place of greater safety; and the fourth a boy, who was struck as he lay quietly in his bed.

But people are sometimes smitten when there is nothing whatever to

excite alarm; at their own firesides, or whilst engaged in their daily work, or whilst walking along the street. To how many, moreover, it has happened that, as in the cases we have narrated, they only just escaped; sometimes, too, whilst others perished at their side! Grant that these are exceptional cases, still, to any man times may occur in which there is literally "but a step between himself and death," so that in a very special sense he may be said to be "between two worlds."

Some of our readers can doubtless recall such a time, when this world seemed fast receding from their sight, death appeared all but certain, and the "world to come," with all its solemn realities, seemed close at hand. You were exposed to imminent peril, from which you escaped only as if by a hair-breadth; or you were smitten by sickness which you had great reason to fear would prove fatal. The vividness of your impressions must doubtless have somewhat faded, but you cannot have forgotten all you then thought and felt. Does not the scene of your peril often rise distinctly before your view? or the sick-room, in which your friends moved about with bated breath and noiseless footsteps, whilst your life trembled in the balance? It might be that you had a good hope in Christ, and that therefore you were calm and fearless. But perhaps it was otherwise.

We have seen it stated by persons who had been exposed to great danger, that it seemed as though in a moment their whole life passed in review before them. Perhaps it was thus with you; and as your past life stared you in the face, with its follies, and mistakes, and sins all unforgiven, there went up from your heart an impassioned cry for mercy. Was there not also the resolve, that if God would only spare you, your life should be spent very differently? You would make it your first care to find salvation; and then you would take God's word for your

guide, and live a life of thankful obedience.

Well, your life *has* been spared. Suffer us to ask, what has become of your resolves and vows?

We have neither the right nor the wish to assume that in every case such vows are forgotten. There are no doubt many who can say, "Thank God! I have not forgotten mine. I am still deeply conscious of failure, and imperfection, and sin; but from the time when I experienced that great deliverance, I have lived a new and better life. Ever since then my trust has been fixed on Christ, through whom I humbly believe my sins have all been forgiven, and through whose Spirit I think I can say that my heart has been renewed. Depending on His grace, I have been endeavouring ever since to lead a life of faithful, loving service, and it is my earnest desire to do so till death, and for ever."

But perhaps your case is very different. It may be that your recollections of peril, and deliverance, and resolve, have alike faded away, and that your life is just what it was before, except, indeed, that you are still farther from God. In His good providence, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, your day of opportunity, which seemed so nearly ended, has been prolonged, but up till now *you have wasted it*. Is not this faithless, ungrateful, wrong? Guilty before, do you not feel that your guilt is largely increased by your continued forgetfulness of God, especially after such a deliverance and such vows? Blessed be His name, late as it is, it is not yet too late. There is yet a "place of repentance." He waits to receive you, and to grant you, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, complete forgiveness and everlasting life.

Some solemn thoughts are further suggested by the facts we have narrated.

Let the reader make quite sure that the guide to whom he commits the

direction of his life is a competent one, and a trustworthy one. The guide by whom the writer and his son were led up to that perilous shelf of rock professed to be well acquainted with the country, and to be able to lead them by a better, and quicker, and easier way to their destination, than by the beaten track. The issue showed that his professions were false; and his mistaken guidance had well-nigh involved them in destruction.

So, often, in life. Many a time it happens that a young man, at the outset of his course, becomes acquainted with one who professes to be his friend, and who tries to persuade him to forsake "the old paths and the good way" along which parents, and teachers, and ministers tried to lead him. The Bible, he tells him, is a collection of old and useless fables, and Christianity is a worn-out superstition. And it too often happens that unbelief and vicious indulgence go hand-in-hand, and the man who saps a youth's religious principles leads him also in the paths of sinful pleasure. Does any one thus seek to lead you astray? As you love your life, your peace, your immortal soul, have nothing to do with him. There is only one safe Guide for life, and that is God Himself, through the guide-book of His word. Take Him as your "heritage for ever." Say, like the Psalmist, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." By the aid of the Holy Spirit, this inspired word will lead you safely through life; it will conduct you to heaven.

Morally and spiritually, all men are wanderers. God's own word describes them as lost. "They have turned every one to his own way." "They have all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Now, the very purpose for which the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth was, that He might "seek and save that which was lost." He speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd, going after the solitary sheep which He had lost, until He found it. He could only do this by consenting that the LORD should "lay on Him the iniquity of us all." But because He died for us, we can now for His sake be forgiven all our sins, and there can be freely granted to us the grace of the loving and almighty Spirit, who can make our hearts altogether new.

Reader, are you yet wandering? Christ is seeking you, and seeking you that He may save you from everlasting death. He has sought you by the preaching of His word, and by all the faithful appeals which have in any other way been addressed to your conscience; it may be, too, by the discipline of sorrow and trials. Once again, He seeks you by this word of ours. Will you not bless Him for His love, and, confessing and bewailing all your sins, cast yourself, for present and eternal salvation, upon Jesus Christ and His finished work? "He that believeth shall be saved." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "The night cometh," and other refuge there is none. "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation."

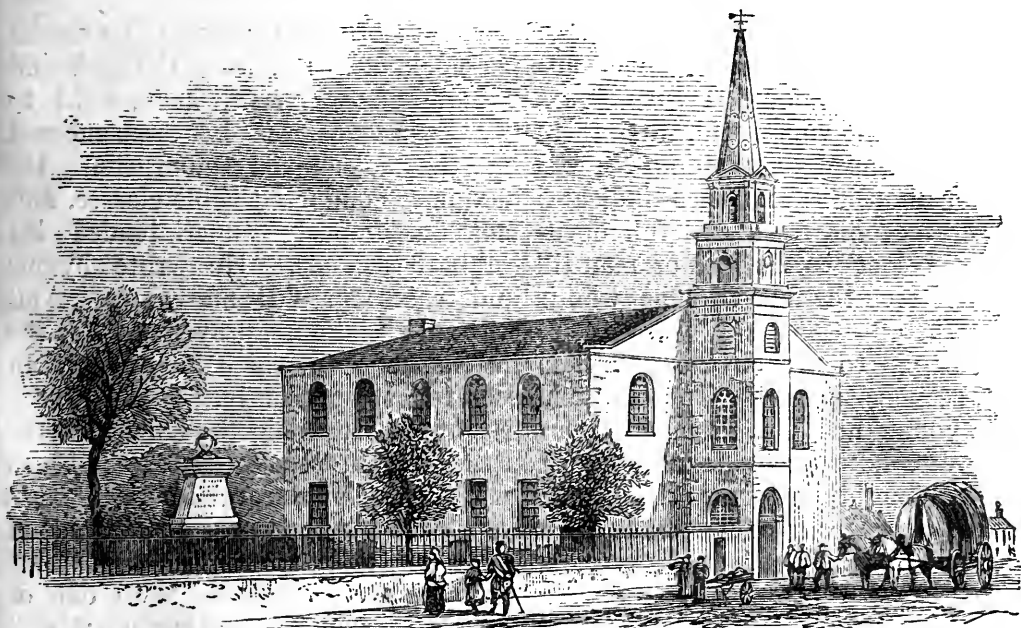
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1874.

ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE.



St. Peter's Church, Dundee.

“OUR conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour.” This might have been read on the happy yet solemn countenance of ROBERT M. M'CHEYNE during all the days of his ministry.

He was born at Edinburgh in 1813, early attracted attention, and became a favourite in the circles in which he moved; but for seventeen years of his life had no more than the form of godliness. The creature was loved more than the Creator. The Bible was formally read. The Sabbath was a

weariness. “How gladly would I have escaped,” says he, speaking of that period, “from the Shepherd who sought me as I strayed!” It was the remembrances of a godly brother, who was cut off in 1830, that first pierced his soul with deep and enduring convictions. The first dawn of the eternal day broke upon his soul while mourning that brother's removal. “How blest to me, Thou, O God, only knowest who madest it so!”

There was nothing sudden in his conversion, and nothing awful in his

awakening. He was led by the Spirit to Christ through solid and deepening views of sin and want. His sense of sin and want hastened his flight to the City of Refuge. "Perhaps my old sins are too fearful, and my unbelief too glaring! Nay, I come to Christ, not *although* I am a sinner, but *because* I am a sinner, even the chief." And now life wore another aspect, for the light of God and of eternity rested upon it. He writes: "Awfully important question, Am I redeeming the time?" And again: "Oh that heart and understanding may grow together, like brother and sister, leaning on one another." His daily experience now is thus expressed, "Peaceful, *because* believing." (Isa. xxvi. 3.) "I will learn to glory in disappointments." And thinking on the multitude of unsaved souls,—“Should I give hours and days to the vain world, when there is a world of misery at my door?” His rule for morning exercises indicates the secret of his fresh and full devotion,—“Never see the face of man till you have seen the face of Him who is our life.”

He began to preach the gospel in 1835, seeking to glorify God, and win souls, young and old, from the very first. With how much of sympathizing love he sought to draw the young may be seen from one passage of a letter which he wrote to a boy in whose salvation he felt deep interest. “Would you sleep less tranquilly at night if you had forgiveness of your sins?” And then he proceeds to say: “I fancy few boys ever were happier in an unconverted state than I was; so I know that you may be saying quite true when you say that you are happy as you are. But ah! is not this the saddest thing of all?—that you should be happy whilst you are a child of wrath! Soul, eat, drink, and be merry, and sleep sound! when this night you may be in hell.”

He had sought to learn to draw the bow while yet only a student, by visiting the poor and neglected in some

of the closes and lanes of the Canon-gate in Edinburgh. And now he entered into the work of labouring for souls more fully at Dunipace, in Stiringshire. From this place he was called to St. Peter's in Dundee, where a congregation of earnest hearers hung upon his lips—his tall, light, attractive form, combining with his mild, solemn dignity, and holy manner, to arrest. The Lord gave the increase. Souls were awakened. Almost every Sabbath some arrow seemed to wound to the heart. As for himself, he yearned over his people. “How often have I listened at your windows for the melody of psalms!” reveals how every symptom of grace was eagerly watched for by their pastor.

“Not slothful in business,” he visited his flock, and not least the sick and dying. At funerals, he sought to say what might be remembered by the solemnized mourners. He anxiously conducted Bible classes, and most assiduously superintended his Sabbath schools. He wrote hymns and tracts for old and young. And with all his labours, prayer still was the instrument with which he wrought in secret most unfailingly.

But the Lord laid the hand of sickness on him; palpitation of the heart unfitted him for a season for great exertion. During the weeks of that season of inactivity, he was to be found walking with God. He wrote to one of his brethren, “My beating heart still beats on, pointing me to the temple where all are priests, offering eternal sacrifices of praise without sin or sorrow. I love to pray, and when my heart is near God, then I love to think of you all, my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life, and to pray for your personal holiness, and that the blessed Spirit may, by means of you, glorify Christ.”

At this very time, the same Lord who laid him aside from his ministry put it into the heart of some who were deeply interested in the Jews to send out a Mission of Inquiry regarding

them to Palestine and other countries. He was one of four ministers sent forth on this errand in 1839. And no less on this journey than at home, did he manifest an Enoch-like spirit.

Passing through France onward to Malta, and thence to Alexandria, he and his three companions journeyed on to Palestine by the "Short Desert," entering the Promised Land by "the way of the Philistines." The Sabbath was never once used as a day of travel; on the contrary, resting in the tent, or under some palm-tree, it was a day of special rest and refreshment, even in the solitudes of the wilderness. "The desert (says he) has its charms. You are there alone with God. No object attracts your eye; there is only one wide ocean round and round." He writes again: "A foreign land draws us nearer to God; He is the only one whom we know here." His soul fed on the associations called up by the sight of Gaza, Kirjath-jearim, Jerusalem, "the city of the Great King." He seemed to see a spread-out page of the Bible at such spots as Bethlehem, and Hebron, and Sychar, but especially at the Lake of Galilee. The fulfilments of prophecy at Carmel, Tyre, Bethel, as well as Jerusalem and Samaria, and other remarkable spots of the land, not only interested him, but deepened his faith in "the true and faithful witness."

At Smyrna, fever laid him prostrate; but he could say of all that time, "I had no fear to die, for Christ had died." And at that very season, when he was brought so low, his Master was working wonderfully for his flock in his absence. In Dundee, under the ministry of the late lamented William C. Burns, missionary in China, the congregation of St. Peter's was visited with a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Multitudes were moved by the simple preaching of the word, accompanied by abundant prayer.

Before Mr. M'Cheyne reached home, near the end of 1839, the news of this great awakening had gladdened him;

and, restored to some considerable measure of health, his heart exulted in again standing among his flock. His first sermon was blessed to one who had neglected or withstood all previous opportunities. In one of his note-books there are notices of more than four hundred who at this time visited him under concern for their souls, though many of these turned back; for "when Christ is nearest, Satan is busiest."

He went, when invited, to other parishes and districts of the country to preach; and everywhere the people felt a strange persuasiveness and unction in his words. His unvarying watchfulness over his own spirit, and his holy walk with God, gave mighty power to all he spoke, and to what he wrote also. His name became known over Scotland, and among the Presbyterians of Ireland, whose mission to the Jews originated in a visit which he made to Ulster in 1841. Many in England, also, prized his ministry; and specially was his visit to Newcastle remembered, and that night when, in the open air and in moonlight, he preached on "The Great White Throne."

In one of his hymns he sings,—

"Chosen, not for good in me;
Wakened up from wrath to flee;
Hidden in the Saviour's side;
By the Spirit sanctified;
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe."

To the end, constrained by such motives, he breathed such fervent desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. "As I was walking in the fields," he writes about this time, "the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon either be in heaven or in hell. Oh, how I wished I had a tongue like thunder, that I might make all hear, or that I had a frame like iron, that I might visit every one, and say, *Escape for thy life!*" "Ah, sinners, you little know how

I fear that you will lay the blame of your condemnation upon me!" His letters were memorable, never failing to tell of Christ. "To be awakened, you need to know *your own heart*; to be saved, you need to *know the heart of God and of Christ*." Thus he would commend his Lord.

No wonder such a man was by some esteemed even too highly, and that he needed to sound the warning, "It is a common error into which people run, they mistake friendship for the minister for faith in the Son of God." He said at another time, "Ministers are but the pole; it is to the Brazen Serpent you are to look." If some of his people fell into the snare of almost idolizing their pastor, the snare was soon broken, for his ministry soon reached its close. Typhus fever was raging in Dundee, and while visiting one of his sick he caught the infection. When in his delirium, he seemed praying for his flock, sometimes preaching the word with all earnestness and affection, sometimes giving thanks. He sank under the fever on 25th March 1843, being only in his 29th year when "God took him."

Reader, such a man as this, "being dead, yet speaketh." Jesus Christ, out of whose fulness he drew, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and as free to you as to him. Consider the end of his conversation; and whoever you are, remember this man will be a witness against you if you are found hiding your talent in the earth, or calling your God an austere master.

Perhaps the eye that glances over this tract once gazed on the face of him of whom it speaks. If so, have

you ever yet forgotten his intense desire for your salvation? Or perhaps you are one who have had a pastor like him, in real affection for your soul. Well, reader, your pastor's words are not vanished into air; they still exist, ay, even in your heart. Often do Mr. M'Cheyne's words start to the memory of those who used to hear him; often they feel that they cannot help recalling his glowing words, his warnings, his utterances of kind entreaty. How do you think it will yet be when *resurrection and judgment* come, and your quickened memory then recalls what the Lord used to address to you by His servant?

Some years after his death, on a Sabbath evening, there was seated in a Bible class in a prison a married woman, who seemed to become very thoughtful when Revelation iii. was read in her hearing. Next day she said to him who had read it, "You made me tremble last night when you read that chapter, and I have been so troubled that I could not sleep." She was asked, "Why did you tremble at hearing that chapter?" "Oh, it was one of the chapters from which I once heard Mr. M'Cheyne preach!" Reader, Mr. M'Cheyne has now been thirty-one years with the Lord in glory, and see how his words were still bearing witness in the conscience of hearers who once had spurned them. *In prison*, this soul remembered its former Sabbaths and solemn testimonies, *in hell*, it may be, many souls will too late remember how often the Lord's messengers, and the Lord by their means, would have gathered them, and they would not.

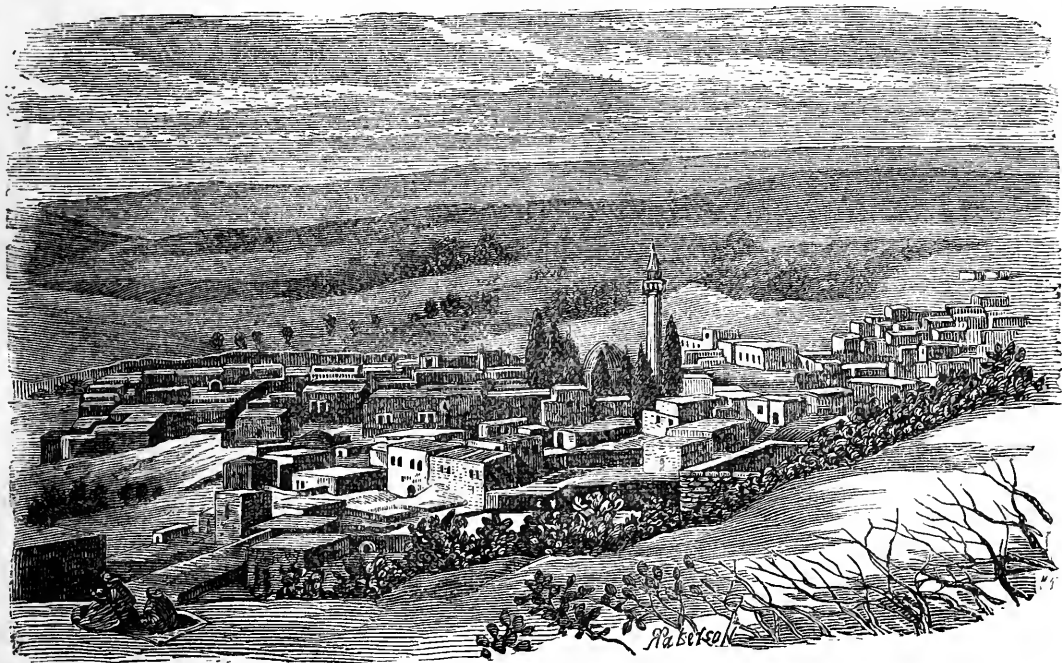
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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1874.

"JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY."



Nazareth.

ON one occasion, about the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, we learn (Matt. iv. 13) that, "leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum." From this fact alone we could not learn much; but the fact becomes greatly significant when we discover the reason of it.

His public ministry had now begun. The baptism of the Holy Spirit had come upon Him. He had entered into conflict with the great Enemy, and

had overcome. He had made a journey to Jerusalem, as we learn from John's Gospel; and when, after that interval, He returned to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, His manner was changed. The people of the town soon saw the difference. It was no longer the retiring, gentle youth, coming and going at His mother's word. He began to speak. He spoke as one with authority, and not as the Scribes. He spoke with the authority of God.

He wielded a sword which pierced the conscience, and would give the old heart no rest in its deepest hiding-place. His ministry of reconciliation had begun. None could remain indifferent; those who would not submit felt it necessary to oppose. No middle course was possible. He came not to send peace, but a sword, into the unclean conscience; and the neighbour Nazarenes felt its point in their joints and marrow.

He stood up in the synagogue (Luke iv. 16-32), and read the appointed portion for the day. He presented Himself as the fulfilment of the prophecies. He so preached that the congregation found it impossible to admire the sermon and yet continue in their sins. They were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city stood, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way, and came down to Capernaum.

These facts in the history of Luke put life and meaning into the short statement of Matthew that He left one town and went to another. He went from Nazareth because He was driven away. When the people of one place refused to receive Him, He left them, and went to another.

He went to Capernaum, and remained there. His presence was a blessing. Then, and thereby, the people who sat in darkness "saw a great light."

It was when His ministry began—it was when He pierced their hearts by the sword of the Spirit, that the people of Nazareth began to dislike Him. As long as He was only their gentle neighbour, they rather liked to have Him in the town: it was when He claimed to be Lord in their hearts that they drove Him to another.

None of Christ's words or acts are "of any private interpretation." They have a meaning for all persons and all times. He deserted one town and visited another, in Galilee long ago,

that we in this country to-day might "stand in awe and sin not,"—that we might rejoice when the same Lord visits our hearts or our neighbourhood with converting power, and rejoice with trembling lest by our hardness we grieve His Spirit and drive Him away.

In many places, and with many persons, Jesus is borne with, and even liked, as a neighbour, but resisted and driven off whenever He claims to reign in the heart. Men will even boast to have Christ in their neighbourhood, and yet will not open when He knocks at their own door. Christ in the creed, your profession of faith, is one thing: "Christ in you the hope of glory" is another.

Young persons who have been brought up in a Christian family, accustomed to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel from the dawn of their intelligence, seem to be like the people of Nazareth when Jesus dwelt there. In a sense, the Lord's own promise is fulfilled in the youth's experience, "*Lo, I am with you always.*" With him Jesus has been from the moment when he first could lisp a hymn or repeat a text. Jesus and that child have dwelt in the same town, walked on the same streets, met in the same company. There is a period in the history of such a youth when his relation to Christ the Saviour must undergo a great change, either for the better or the worse. There is either a wide breach or a closer friendship.

A time comes round, like that at Nazareth, when Jesus, baptized by the Spirit, proclaimed the people lost in sin, and presented Himself as Lord and Saviour. In the opening intelligence of the youth, and perhaps at some period of providential trial or spiritual revival, the conviction comes in that Christ makes a greater demand upon him than merely to dwell in the same town. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open, I will come in." This knocking, at one period or another, every one hears. When one hears it, he passes through

a great struggle, whether, on the one hand, to shut the door and refuse, or on the other, to open it and surrender. On one side or on the other it must be decisive. Christ is not divided, so as to be half yours and half not; neither can *you* be divided, so as to be half His and half not. "No man can serve two masters." Many have a secret but strong dislike to hear all mankind ranked in two classes, and only two. They do not believe they are yet on Christ's side; neither are they willing to acknowledge, even to themselves, that they are against Him. The deceitful heart pleads hard for the recognition of a third class,—those who have neither wholly closed with the Saviour nor wholly rejected Him—a kind of middle class, who are "thinking about Him." Well, we have no objection to allow that there are three such classes; but one thing is clear and sure as the light of heaven, that if life closes on them where they are, one of them only is saved, and two of them perish. Those who are overtaken by the final call while they are considering whether they will be Christ's, perish as surely and as hopelessly as those who go away blaspheming His name.

Most of the conflicts are decided in youth. Here and there one is turned after he has reached grey hairs, but not very many. Ah! when the book is opened which contains the heart-history of youth, a great flood of secrets will be revealed. In every one there has been a battle. At some period of every one's youth, Christ made a demand to be admitted to the heart and set upon its throne. In some, in many, He was received. He entered in and dwelt there. In some, in many, he was resisted and rejected. Lord, is it I?

Reader, when you have felt strong convictions and quenched them, you can never be the same as you were again. An offer of close friendship rejected leaves the parties at greater enmity than before. This is certainly

the effect of stifling convictions in a human soul. If you have driven Christ away when He was very near, and very urgent for entrance, you will be afterwards unable to look Him in the face. You will keep more resolutely out of His way. You will plunge deep into such employments and such company as may be most likely to hide you from His presence. It is a dreadful thing to refuse Christ when he is manifestly moving in the city, and knocking at every door. When one has sent Christ away, and taken his own course for a time, he finds great difficulties in the way of renewing the intercourse; but the difficulties are all in himself. The prodigal, after having hurt his father so much, found it difficult, no doubt, to make up his mind to face his father. When things went against him in a far country, he did not think of going home. He would rather go to service. When he was not only a menial servant, but in want of human food, he would still rather endure his privation than face a father whom he had offended so deeply. He would live on swine's food in a foreign land rather than go home; and only when he could not obtain even that did he consent at last, and resolve, "I will arise, and go to my father." It was hard to bring the prodigal's heart up to the point of willingness to meet his father; but there was no difficulty on the father's side. He was ready always. His heart yearned after his alienated son all the time of his absence. At the very first return of the rebellious but softened and humbled youth, the father ran, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. Reader, have you in like manner gone away from God and Christ? and would you like to return now, if there were hope that such as you are would be received? The father receiving the prodigal is the picture held down from heaven to let you see the Saviour's heart. Though you have resisted, rejected, crucified Him, He now waits, ready to receive you, longing to get you, grieving for the want of you.

Nor is it needful that you should first reform yourself and then hope to be accepted. The prodigal was not able first to clean, and feed, and clothe himself, in order to be worthy of his father's house. If he had been able to do all that for himself, he would probably not have been willing to return to his father. He came without them, to get them from his father. His father gave him all, and loved to give him all. Such is the manner in which you who resisted Christ before should return to Him now. Come, although you are naked and empty. Come *because* you are naked and empty. Come to Him to get all, and He will receive you and give you all.

In our land to-day there are not a few second meetings between sinners and Christ. They who have met Him before and deserted Him are in great confusion of face when they come back; but He upbraideth not, and soon they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But remember, in the midst of all these precious encouragements, the solemn warning contained in the simple fact that Jesus went away from Nazareth when its people refused to receive Him. In Christ there is mercy, a mercy that receives and forgives the chief of sinners; but underneath His mercy lies His righteous judgment. When sinners have, by their provocations, worn off the mercy that lay next them, they come upon His terrible righteousness at last. He cries, "How can I give you up?"—yet He *gives* up those who will have none of Him. He does not like to go away, but He goes. He goes weeping, but He goes. He

goes looking behind with longing, willing to be beckoned back, but He goes. From those who will not have Him He goes away. From those who have refused Him He abides away for ever; His own lips will yet say, "Depart from me, ye cursed." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

Now, He can visit Capernaum without deserting Nazareth. He can come and reveal His saving power in Scotland without deserting America. He can abide with those who love His company in Edinburgh, and also be in the midst of the disciples assembled in Aberdeen, breathing the Holy Ghost on them also. We hear of His glorious goings at this day in Belfast and Dublin; yet many a company, small and great, in England and Scotland, feel their hearts burning within them while He talks with them by the way and opens the Scriptures.

Christ's departure from Nazareth, where He had long dwelt, reads a very clear, loud warning this season to all in our own land who have not yet personally closed with Him as their own Redeemer. The year is closing in. It has been a year of grace. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He lingers here; He beckons, pleads, calls; He receives all who come. And many have come,—in clouds, like doves to their windows. Yet He is not satisfied; He still stands, and cries, Come. He weeps over those who will not—weeps for them, and leaves them. Then, when "Jesus of Nazareth HAS passed by," there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, no other Saviour for sinners.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1875.

"UNCLE JOHNSON."



(See page 3.)

It is still the custom in some towns of the Far West of North America, as well as in New England, to announce the death of individuals by measured strokes of the bell, each stroke marking a year of the life of the deceased. Not long since, the inhabitants of Y—— wearied and wondered in counting the strokes of the bell, as it tolled first the number of infancy, then of childhood, then of manhood, then of old age. But the wonder who had died passed away ere

the counting had reached *one hundred and twenty*, for all knew that "UNCLE JOHNSON" had at last gone home.

"Uncle Johnson" was of purely African descent. His full name was *Johnson Harrison*—the Harrison, as he said, being his master's name in Virginia; and the *Johnson* his own; for which reason he preferred being called by the latter.

His first master had felt that his servants were, in some sense, members of his family, and recorded their names in

the family Bible. The old man remembered seeing opposite his name 1745. The month he could not recall. In confirmation of the great age which such a date would give him, as he lived to the year 1864, he said that he was a man grown when sent out to throw fire-balls in the evening because of the joyful news of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He stated also that he was about thirty before he was allowed to have a wife; that he lived with her fifty years; then for several years had no wife; and his last wife, who died two years before him, said that she had lived with him twenty-eight years. He also stated that he was set free by his last master, and sent to Canada, partly because he was more than one hundred years old, and by right of age deserved to be his own master.

But he was still more interesting and remarkable in regard to his religion. He accounted for his long life in part by saying, "I neber worked bery hard. When I was a boy I chored 'bout house, and den for about sixty years I blowed de gospel trumpet on de plantation for 'bout six month ob de year, to make de slaves good and 'ligious." His own account of his early religious knowledge and experience was nearly as follows:—"I was quite a chunk of a boy afore I hearn much of 'ligion—afore I hearn much about dis glorious gospel. Once in 'bout a year one o' dem clergy dat com'd ober de big water com'd round and preached up all de funerals ob de slaves dat died sen he com'd afore, and sometimes I feels very bad den. But after a bit dere com'd round one ob de big men from de college in de Jarseys, and he tell'd us 'bout de matter werry solemn. But I know nothing den about Jesus." (And now the tears began to trickle down the old man's cheeks.) "An' den dar com'd along dat man dat died an' den com'd to life again, an' he tell'd de slaves 'bout Jesus. Oh, what was his name? I don't mind now." I suggested *William Tennent*. "Oh,

yes, massa! *Willie Tennent*! Glory to God! After I heard him, how I did feel! When I was walking on de ground, it would keep sayin', '*Unworthy! Unworthy!*' When I took a bit ob bread, or a cup of water, dey keep sayin', '*Unworthy! Unworthy!*' When I goes into de field, all de trees keep sayin', '*Unworthy! Unworthy!*' When I goes into de yard, I sees dat all de cattle kneels down afore dey lies down, an' I neber done dat. Oh, massa! I thought I should die; I feels so bad." (Then he would go on in various terms to tell of his utter despair.) "But bymbye dere com'd along a coloured man, who telled me des no use in my libin' dat way. He telled me ob de passage dat says, 'Behold de Lamb of God, dat takes away de sin ob de world;' an' den I goes into de woods, an' all night I cries, 'Lamb of God, hab mercy on dis poor man!' an' I cries an' prays dis ober and ober; an' oh, massa, just as de light was coming ober de mountains of ole Virginia, de light of Jesus shined into dis poor soul, an' from dat day on, now about a hundred years, I've been tryin' to tell to saints and sinners round what a dear Saviour I have found."

For about five days in the week he was alone most of the day; his wife, who was sixty years younger than himself, going out to work in neighbouring families, and his two children being at school or play. During their absence he would often spend hours in talking, praying, and singing. We called upon him one day just as he closed one of these services. As soon as he saw us he cried out, with tears flowing down his face, "Oh, massa! Jesus has been here, an' I tought I was in glory; but I will be dere bymbye." "You mean to be faithful to the end, Uncle Johnson?" I said. "Oh, massa! I'se bound for de kingdom. I'se not been holding on all dis way to fail jus at de gate." Once, as I interrupted him upon one of these occasions, he exclaimed,

"Oh, massa! de Lord is passing by; does you want to speak to Him?"

One day while he was at work in his garden, singing and shouting, I said, "You seem happy to-day?" "Yes, massa, I'se just tinkin'." "What are you thinking of?" "Oh, I'se just tinkin',"—and then his emotions prevented utterance. "I'se just tinkin' that ef de crumbs dat fall from de Masser's table in dis world am so good, what will de *great loaf* in glory be? I tells you, massa, dar will be 'nough an' to spare dere."

Once I said to him, "Uncle Johnson, why don't you go to church once in a while?" He answered, "Massa, I wants to be dere, but I can't 'have.'" "You can't *behave*?" "Well, massa, you knows, late years, the flesh be weak; an' when they 'gins to talk and sing about Jesus, I 'gins to fill up, and putty soon I has to holler, an' den dey says, 'Carry dat man to de door! he 'sturb de meetin'.'" "But you should hold in till you get home." "Oh, massa, I can't hold—I *bust* if I don't holler."

He said, "When I wants anything, I asks de Lord, and He's sure to send it; sometimes afore I done asking, an' sometimes He waits jus to see if I trusts Him." Once, when we indicated a little doubt upon this subject, he said, "Massa, don't you know dat de Lord send de ravens to feed de prophet? Him is jus as good now as den." We chanced to be present when one called with whom he was not acquainted. After entering and shaking the old man by the hand, he gave him a dollar. "Massa, tank you, tank you. Sit down, sit down." "No, not now, I am in a hurry. I hope you are getting along comfortably. Good-bye." "Hold! hold! massa! Afore you go, I wants to know if you are bound for de kingdom? May be I'll neber see you again. Am you bound for dat land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign? Hab you de passport?" "The what?" "De passport,—all signed and sealed wid the blood of

Jesus? You must hab dat, or you will neber get fru de gates ob de city."

Nothing rejoiced him more than to hear that sinners were inquiring the way to the Saviour. Such tidings would make him weep for joy. Once, lifting his hands, he cried, "O Lord! call dem in. O Lord! make dem willing in de day of dy power." Once, in illustrating that sinners should be more in earnest, he said, "Many tink dey be seeking 'ligion, and dey be just putting it off all de time."

His confidence in the word of God was unbounded. Let him be sure that the Lord had said anything, and nothing could shake his faith in it. I was calling on him one day with a friend, who, by way of trying him, said, "Uncle Johnson, you believe so-and-so?" naming some fundamental doctrine of the gospel. "Yes, massa, I believes dat." "What makes you believe that?" "Cause, massa, you knows dat de Lord says so," quoting a passage or two. "Well, Uncle Johnson, you believe so-and-so?" naming another doctrine, seemingly antagonistic to the former. "Yes, massa, I believe dat too, 'cause de Lord said," and then he quoted again. "But see here, uncle, both of these things can't be true; you said you believed so-and-so, and also *so-and-so*. Now, how do you *reconcile* these two things? They can't both be true in the nature of things; it is not philosophical that both should be true." And thus my friend went on attempting to confuse the old man with metaphysical subtleties. Uncle Johnson heard him for a while, and then, lifting himself from his chair, and in a manner indicating grief and impatience, said, "Massa, I knows nothing about your *philosophies*, and your *natur ob tings*, but I knows dat the Lord *said* dem tings, an' I hab tried de Lord more than a hundred years (weeping), and I'se not going now to gib up *one ting dat He said*." Having said this he sat down. My friend turned and said to me in a low tone, "That will do; I give it up." Well would it have been for many

had they been like poor old Uncle Johnson!

Uncle Johnson fasted and prayed as very few in these days have done. His fasting, as well as his praying, was thorough and earnest. He said, "Dem are de days when I says to de body, 'Stan' back dere! I'se going to feed the soul to-day.'" Of these days of fasting and prayer he once said, "Dese are de days when I spreeds de big tings afore de Lord, and begs."

A great sorrow overtook him in the death of his wife, who rapidly but very trustfully descended into the valley of the shadow of death. What a figure of grief and triumph, in the presence of the stillness and solemnity of death! This aged one, standing by the bedside of the lifeless form of his wife, with uplifted face and hands, was crying, "Farewell, Ellen, farewell, my dear Ellen; must you leave me? must you leave me? O Jesus! my dear Ellen is coming! Gib her one ob de mansions till I come; Lord Jesus! how can I wait? Send de chariot again." Then, kneeling by the bedside, he breathed his sorrows into the ear of his Saviour in such a prayer as we never expect to hear again. From that hour on, through the funeral occasion and in the days following, his spirit and manner were very beautiful. Being human, he often felt lonely; and believing that he would ultimately reach heaven, he greatly longed to be there. We said to him one day, "Uncle Johnson, don't you feel lonely since Ellen left you?" "Oh, yes, massa, feels very lonely; but den de Lord comes round ebery day, and gives me a taste ob de king-

dom, jus as de nus would wid de spoon; but, oh! how I *wants to get hold ob de dish*" (suited the action to the words).

Ever after Ellen's death he seemed only waiting, as he said, "for dat chariot to come again." Once, after he had been ill for a few days, as he began to get out again, I said, "I thought that your appointed time had about come." He replied, "Oh, yes, I tought dat day dat I could see de dust ob de chariot coming ober de mountains, and den somethin' said, 'Hold on, Johnson, a little longer. I'll come round directly.' Yes, massa, an' I will hold on, if de Lord please, anoder hundred years, for I'se bound for Canaan." Then he broke out singing—

"But this I do find, we two are so join'd,
He'll not live in glory and leave me behind."

One day Dr. H. called on him with me. After a conversation, he said, "I must now go; good-bye, Uncle Johnson; I shall probably hear soon that you have gone over Jordan, but we will follow on." "Oh, yes! massa, great many years ago young men like you tell me dat, an' den after a bit I'd hear dat dey had gone home, an' I am a pilgrim yet; but I always manages to send word." "Well, if I should die first," said Dr. H., "what word would you send?" "Oh, massa, if you get home afore I do (weeping), tell 'em to *keep detable standin'*, for Johnson is holdin' on his way. *I'se bound to be dere.*"

Of his death we know but little. His illness was brief. In such an hour as he thought not, the Son of Man came.

(G. L. Foster.)

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THE EVERLASTING LIFE.



"But the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!'"
—See page 3.

THE life "that now is," to which men cling so fondly, hardly deserves the name of life at all. It is poor at the best; vain and short even at its longest; made up of things which perish with the using. There is so little of substance in it, and that little passes away so quickly, that we can scarcely be said to *live* here. Our earth may more truly be called the land of the dying than "the land of the living."

A friend once met another whom he had not heard of for years, and exclaimed, "What! are you still in the land of the living?" "No," was the answer, "but I am very near it." The world to come was to him the true "land of the living." All that was worth living for was there. He was hastening on to life; that which he had here was more death than life, and at the most it was the mere foreshadowing of what he hoped for.

The life "that now is" has an end, and that end is very near. As the leaf falls, so does man die. As the flower fades, so does man wither away. As the rivers rush on to the sea, so does man hasten on to the eternity into which all things are pouring themselves. Brief, brief is the day of man! He has scarcely begun to live when he is called upon to die!

The "life that now is," if filled only with the things of time, is doubly short and doubly poor. Mere existence, like that of the butterfly, is not life at all. We read of one who, when first roused to know that there was a soul within her, and a God above her, and an eternity before her, cried out in the sadness of her spirit, "Life is not life unless I know the Giver of it." Another, two centuries ago, when brought to realize the emptiness of a present evil world, thus wrote: "I had a deep impression of the things of God; sin appeared as if it were hell itself; the world and its vanities seemed terrible, and exceeding dangerous; it was fearful to have to do with it, or to be rich; I saw its day coming; Scripture expressions were weighty; a Saviour was a big thing in mine eyes; Christ's agonies were then earnest with me; and I thought that all my days I had been in a dream till now, or like a child in jest; and I thought the world was sleeping."

There is, then, a life that is not life; and there is a life that is life. Of both of these God has fully spoken to us. The "fashion of this world passeth away," but "he that doeth the will of God endureth for ever." "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity." "The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

It is of "the life to come," the "everlasting life," that God has spoken so much to us. It is full, it is blessed, it is glorious, it is eternal. God knows what it is, and what it is worth, and He invites us to partake of it, to make it our own. God knows how much we

need it; that these souls must be forever dark and wretched without it; and so He urges us to make sure of it; for without it we had better been as the beasts that perish; we had better never been born.

It is of that "everlasting life" that God speaks to us when He tells us that "in His presence is fulness of joy, and that at His right hand are pleasures for evermore." It was of that "everlasting life" that the Lord Jesus so often spoke to us when He was here, and which He still presents to the sinner as His free gift, asking no price and no merit, but pleading with the sons of men that they would take from His hands, freely and without waiting, that which He came from heaven to earth to purchase for them.

This "everlasting life" begins with deliverance from the wrath to come. The sinner has long slept the sleep of death, but is at length startled out of his slumber by the thought of danger, and judgment, and woe. He looks *in* for help, but there is no help there; he cannot save himself or ward off the threatening peril. He looks *round*, but there is no help in man; for what can man do for him if God be against him? He tries to persuade himself that he has not been so bad a sinner as many others, but that does not relieve him. He amends his life, prays, works, strives, but there is something awanting, for all these efforts cannot avert wrath. It was thus that Luther, seeking after God, prayed and fasted, and mortified his body, and climbed the holy stair at Rome. But in vain.

He looks *upward*, and he sees the first gleam of hope. He hears the voice, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

He is now in earnest. He must escape from this death in which he was born. He must have life. Pleasure, business, friendship have lost their charms. He cannot be satisfied with anything till he has found the life, of which, for the first time, he has learned

his need. Like Bunyan's pilgrim, alarmed when he finds that the city of his birth, in which he lives, is to be burnt with fire, he hastens forth, in spite of all hindrances, putting his fingers in his ears and crying, "LIFE, LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE!" Onwards, onwards he hastens, mistaking, perhaps, the way at times, but never resting till he has found, at the cross of the Son of God, the life which he is seeking.

This life is something very precious. If man fails to get it, "good were it for him that he had not been born." To possess nothing but *death* here, and to enter on the possession of a sadder death hereafter when he leaves earth, is a lot inexpressibly sorrowful. And as is the gloom of this death, so is the excellency of the life which God offers to us in exchange. Its price is beyond all price. God only can estimate it. The lost soul hereafter will have some idea of the value of that which he has flung away; and though now he may not appreciate it, yet not the less is it precious beyond all that earth contains. Oh, infinitely precious life, how art thou despised by the sons of men! If men but knew what thou art; what they lose in losing thee; what they would gain in gaining thee, would they not sell all that they have, and obtain thee?

This everlasting life is infinitely blessed. "Life" is but another name for joy, and everlasting life is everlasting joy. All the blessedness of heaven is contained in it. That which Christ calls "my joy" and "my peace" is its very essence. It is such a blessed life as cannot be described or conceived. It must be enjoyed before it can be understood. Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, man's heart hath not conceived it. It was this that Colonel Gardiner tasted when his eyes were first opened to see a crucified Christ, and when he entered into the peace of God by means of that text, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation" for our sins. (Rom. iv. 25.)

This everlasting life is infinitely glori-

ous. It is a life in the midst of glory; it is a life "made up of glory," as an old divine expresses it. It is life in the kingdom of God. It is life in the celestial city. It is life in the presence of the angels. It is life with and in God Himself.

If this life is lost, everything is lost. If this life is won, everything is won. If it is lost, the soul is lost, heaven is lost, happiness is lost. How important for us to know how we may win it!

It comes to us *in believing*. "TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH," (Rom. iv. 5), does the life belong. The "life" lies at the sinner's door. The gospel lays it there. Christ lays it there. The Father lays it there. The Holy Spirit lays it there. "This is the record (or testimony), that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son." (1 John v. 11.) But this life lies outside until we believe. It is in believing that we take it in. It is in believing that it becomes ours. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." It is not "he that believeth and worketh," but simply "he that believeth." The working comes *after* we have got the life, not *before*. We must first live before we can work. We do not work to get life, for life is God's free gift; we work because we have got it by believing in the name of Jesus, the Son of God.

Few can be got to admit that this life comes to us in such a simple way, and is to be obtained on such easy terms. The thing is so great, they say, that we must work for it, and work hard if we hope to get it. Precious things are not got so cheaply among men.

But then man's thoughts are not God's thoughts. Man thinks that he will buy or bargain for this life. God has resolved to give it,—to give it freely. Man's ways are not God's ways. Man has a plan of his own for obtaining this life, and in carrying it out he plods on from day to day, in the hope that the life will never be denied to one who worked so hard and has

done so much, and lived so honestly and well. God's ways are the opposite of all this. He comes up to this toiling man, who is wearying himself with his religious doings under the idea that he will work himself into heaven, and says: "You are quite mistaken in your thoughts and ways; you will never reach heaven by these doings of yours; they are far too poor to deserve heaven as their reward; if heaven is to be purchased, it must be by something far more precious than your works; I have not left it to be thus bought and sold; my only-begotten Son has bought that heaven for sinners, and I now freely present it to you as my gift, to be had simply for the taking."

The conversion of the martyr Latimer, through means of his friend "little Bilney," as he used to call him, is a fine exhibition of the free and simple gospel. Latimer, like Saul of Tarsus, was zealous for the old way, preaching against the new gospel of forgiveness by faith with great energy. Bilney had already received the good news, and was walking in the light. He pitied his dear but blinded friend, and sought to deliver him from his chains. He went to the house of Latimer, and asked to be allowed to "confess" to him. "Ah, he is coming to recant his errors," thought Latimer, and gladly received him. Bilney, "little Bilney," went down upon his knees and poured out his soul. He told how wretched he once had been by reason of guilt, and how he had tried in vain to get pardon by his own doings. He told how his burden had been all unloosed, and how he had found peace by looking to the Lamb of God. He

described the change. He spoke of his inward peace and light, of the spirit of adoption, whereby he could now say, *Abba, Father*. Latimer listened, suspecting nothing. He was riveted by the confession of his friend. In that confession God had spoken to him of his free love in Christ. Bilney rose from his knees. Latimer remained absorbed in thought. His sins rose up to view. The vanity of his self-righteous doings appeared. He spoke at length, but it was in the bitterness of his soul. What is he to do with his sins? Bilney preaches the gospel fully. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Latimer listens, and receives the word of the truth of the gospel. His burden falls. He is a new man. He has found eternal life in believing on the Son of God!

This is God's message to the sons of men. "ETERNAL LIFE!" Life that includes in it pardon, and joy, and light, and God's favour for evermore. This is what God speaks of to us in His love; this is what God holds out to us and presses upon us, that we may be saved. He is in earnest with us. It is no pretended offer that He makes. He knows what death is and what life is, and He asks us, with the truest sincerity and pity, to take from His hands the everlasting life, which will give us gladness for ever.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

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ROWLAND HILL.



See page 2.

ROWLAND HILL was born in 1745. He seemed to live for no other end than making known Christ's salvation. In our day, we would have called him an evangelist, like Mr. Moody. But he was one of the "not many noble" who are called (1 Cor. i. 26), being of a rich and distinguished family, sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, Baronet, of Hawkstone, in Shropshire. As the Apostle Peter was led to Christ by his brother (John i. 41, 42), so was Rowland by his brother Richard, while

quite a youth at school. He did not hide his conversion, but, telling to his schoolfellows God's grace to himself, he was the instrument of bringing several of them to the Saviour.

At college, in Cambridge, he was for a time so opposed that he used to say "nobody gave him a cordial smile except the old shoe-black at the gate, who had the love of Christ in his heart." But soon he saw a little band of students, like-minded, gather round him. "Many saw it, and

feared, and trusted in the Lord." (Psalm xl. 3.) He and a few fellow-students who visited the sick and the prisoners were encouraged, under reproach and opposition, by such men of God as George Whitefield.

He had begun open-air preaching, —finding out his gift of ready utterance and racy sayings, which the people had begun to look for wherever he went. His bodily strength was such as fitted him for this work. In his college days he excelled in all athletic exercises, was a bold rider, outstripped his fellows in skating, and so notable in swimming, that one of his feats was to swim up the river against the stream a distance of two miles. He had begun work for souls, more or less publicly, when only in his twenty-first year, full of enthusiasm and faith.

He was not ordained as a minister of the Church of England till 1773. Even then his great work was itinerant preaching. He preached wherever he was invited, in the country, and in London. Eager to encourage others, he, nevertheless, from the first showed shrewdness and discrimination, and could refuse the help of ignorant helpers. To one of this class, who offered his services, Mr. Hill listened patiently as the man went on fluently about "not hiding our talents in a napkin," but dismayed him by his reply, that "the closer *he* hid them the better."

In 1771 we find him preaching to thousands, "the people behaving with the most awful attention," as he spoke on Isaiah xl. 22, "*There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*" At Bristol, preachings at five o'clock in the morning were attended by multitudes. Often he met with insult,—being sometimes pelted with rotten eggs, etc., but the Lord raised up helpers. At Wotton, preaching in the open air, a man seized a stone to fling at him, but another near at hand caught hold of the man's arm, saying, in the Gloucestershire dialect, "If thee du'st touch him, I'll knock thy head off!" not unlike Nebuchad-

nezzar's words in favour of the three Hebrew youths (Dan. iii. 29)—so strange are the instruments God can employ in behalf of His own. Friends said he was imprudent, but he used to reply, "These times and ways were of God, and they led to God."

A friend in London, after his visit to that city in 1772, wrote that "hundreds, nay thousands, had been helped;" notes of thanksgiving being often handed in to the minister from whole families to whom his ministry had been made useful.

His family motto, "*Go Forward,*" suited him well; and his independent fortune enabled him to do much. On he went from year to year. His lively manner, vivid imagination, with occasional touches of humour that seemed to escape from him in spite of himself, contributed to his popularity. Many stories have been told of his wit, but, as in our own day, the public press often invented or exaggerated, giving a caricature instead of a likeness. The general characteristic of his preaching was solid and plain statement of the truth, with animation and fervour. He would show his hearers how "the sinner, convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, sees nothing but flaming vengeance held forth by the law, abandons his legal hopes for ever, and betakes himself to the work of Jesus, resting satisfied with its fullness, and rejoicing in the dignity, and happy in the security, of it."

He liked to quote the saying that "no sermon was of any value that had not in it the *three R's*, namely, *Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Spirit.*"

One day, preaching on Eph. iii. 19, he suddenly lifted his eyes to heaven and exclaimed: "I am unable to reach the lofty theme, yet I do not think that the smallest fish that swims in the boundless ocean ever complains of the immeasurable vastness of the deep. So it is with me. I can plunge with my puny capacity into a subject the immensity of which I shall never be

able fully to comprehend." "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Preaching at Kingswood, near Bristol, to the colliers, streams of tears might be seen making channels down the black faces of the men. It is interesting to find him at another time in Dr. Doddridge's old church at Northampton, taking for his text—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Then we find him at Olney (so well known to us by the "Olney Hymns" of Cowper and Newton) taking for his text—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Sometimes his friend, Berridge of Everton, wrote a word of advice:—"Study not to be a fine preacher; Jerichos are blown down by rams' horns;" "Preach nothing down but the devil, and nothing up but Christ Jesus." A great orator, Sheridan, said he liked to hear him, "because his ideas came red-hot from his heart."

A man who had been much employed in his garden was convicted of many robberies; and when Mr. Hill asked him, "How was it you never robbed me?" "Sir," he replied, "do you recollect the juniper-bush on the border near the dining-room? I have many times hid there at night, intending to get into the house, but, sir, I was afraid. Something said to me, he is a man of God, it is a house of prayer,—if I break in there, I shall surely be found out!"

When the erection of his chapel in London was going on in 1783, he used to gather round him the little children that came to play about the building, and tell them the way of salvation, often taking in his pocket cake and fruit to induce them to come in greater numbers. He was among the first who gave a prominent place to Sabbath schools in congregational work. It was noticed that when he came among them, the children were peculiarly still during his prayers.

He visited Scotland several times, and first in 1796. At Edinburgh, he began by preaching in the old circus at the head of Leith Walk, but his audience increased so that he sought the open air. A platform was erected on the Calton Hill, and there he found ten thousand souls ready to hear the word. His deep commanding voice rolled his words over the vast crowd. Many were savingly impressed. Soldiers from the Castle came to hear, and indeed persons from all ranks. After a short evangelistic tour in the Western Highlands, he returned to Edinburgh; and this time not less than twenty thousand, it is said, assembled on the Calton Hill to hear the gospel of the grace of God from his lips.

He once said of a preacher, "He preaches the gospel as a donkey mumbles a thistle, very cautiously!" Not so was it with himself. "Because I am in earnest," he said, "men call me an enthusiast, but I speak the words of truth and soberness. When I first came into this part of the country, I was walking on yonder hill. I saw a gravel pit fall in, and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard in the town below, at the distance of a mile. Help came, and two of the poor sufferers were rescued. No one called me an enthusiast then; and when I see *eternal destruction* ready to fall upon poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast? No, sinner, I am not an enthusiast when I call on thee aloud to flee for refuge to the hope set before thee in the gospel of Christ Jesus!"

Sometimes his humour led him to say things that other men would never have spoken from the pulpit. On a wet day, a number of persons took shelter in his chapel from a shower. He noticed them come in, and remarked, "Many people are greatly to be blamed for making their religion a

cloak, but I do not think those are much better who make it an *umbrella*." A man fond of strong drink said, "Mr. Hill, do you think a glass of spirits will drive grace out of my heart?" "No, no," he replied, "for there is none in it."

These strokes of humour were merely occasional, but they drew some people to hear him who soon found that he had solemn truth for their consciences.

His popularity continued to the last. When in 1824 he had again visited Scotland, and was preaching at Liverpool on his way home, such was the crowd that one was heard saying, "It is of no use trying to get in, they run over like peas from a bushel." In our day we can quite understand this, for the immense multitudes who have flocked together to hear Mr. Moody preach and Mr. Sankey sing have exceeded all that we read of, in the case either of Rowland Hill or of George Whitefield.

His career as an evangelist is the longest on record, lasting well-nigh seventy years. He died in his eighty-ninth year. "O that I could do more for my God! O that I could bring more souls to Christ!" were exclamations that would drop from him, as he sat at home in his chair, rapt in thought. It was noticed in his latter years how frequently he referred to the lines of Gambold's hymn:

"And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry;
For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why!"

Sometimes adding, "*No, I cannot tell why!* Every sinner saved is a mysterious monument of redeeming love."

The last time he was able to preach at Walworth, when the service was over he walked slowly down the passage in the chapel. It was evening; the lights were almost extinguished, the congregation gone; all was silence, when he was overheard saying to himself,—

"And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry;
For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why!
But this I do find,
We two are so joined,
He'll not live in glory and leave me behind."

And often after this he would repeat the same lines.

He died at London, 19th April 1833, aged 88. The day before, he said to a friend, "Christ is everything to a dying man. But I want to be perfectly holy, perfectly like my dear Lord." When asked, "Would you part with your hope if you could gain the whole world?" his reply was, "Not for ten thousand thousand worlds."

Fellow-sinner, when the Lord sends messengers like this man, to rouse a sleeping world, and a slumbering church, it is all in love. Jesus wept on the Mount of Olives over Jerusalem, because He saw the eternal hell to which that generation was hastening. Jesus rejoiced in spirit when the seventy returned with good news, for He knew what a heaven every one wins who accepts salvation. Herein is love! love waiting to be gracious. In Christ is the blood that cleanses, the righteousness that clothes, the Spirit who makes all things new. And will ye not then "come to Him, that ye might have life"? (John v. 40.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1875.

IS IT REAL?



ACTS viii. 21.

READER, what is this that I ask about? I ask you a solemn question, that deeply concerns your soul. Is your religion real? Is it true, genuine, sincere, honest, and thorough? Real religion is not mere show, and pretence, and skin-deep feeling. It is something inward, living, lasting. You know the difference between base coin and good money—between plated metal and silver. Think of these things as you consider the question which heads this tract. Is your religion real? It may be weak, and mingled with many infirmities. That is not the point to-day. My question is simply,—Is your religion real? Is it true?

Reader, do you wish to have a religion which will comfort you in life, give you good hope in death, and abide the judgment of God at the last day? Then do not turn away from the question before you.

I. *The importance of reality in religion.* All men, I shall be told, are

fully convinced of the importance of reality. But is this true? The greater part of people who profess to admire reality seem to think that every one possesses it! They tell us "that all have got good hearts at bottom,"—that all are sincere and true in the main, though they may make mistakes. They call us uncharitable, and harsh, and censorious, if we doubt anybody's goodness of heart. Reader, I want you to see that *unreality* is one of the great dangers of which Christians ought to beware. Is your religion real?

What saith the Scripture? This is the only judge that can try the subject.

1. Look, then, for one thing, at the parables spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. The parables of the sower, of the wheat and tares, of the draw-net, of the two sons, of the wedding garment, of the ten virgins, of the talents, of the great supper, of the pounds, of the two builders, have all one great point in common. They all show the uselessness and danger of any Christianity which is not real, thorough, and true.

2. Look, for another thing, at the language of our Lord Jesus Christ about the scribes and the Pharisees. Eight times over in one chapter we find Him denouncing them as "hypocrites," in words of almost fearful severity.—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," He says, "how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33.) What may we learn from these tremendously strong expressions, about people who at any rate were more moral and decent than the publicans and harlots? It is meant to teach us the exceeding abominableness of false profession and mere outward religion in God's sight.

3. Look, for another thing, at the startling fact, that there is hardly a grace in the character of a true Christian of which you will not find a counterfeit described in the Word of God.

Is there not an unreal *repentance*? Beyond doubt there is. Saul, and

Ahab, and Herod, and Judas Iscariot, had many feelings of sorrow about sin. But they never really repented unto salvation.

Is there not an unreal *faith*? Beyond doubt there is. It is written of Simon Magus, at Samaria, that he "believed," and yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. It is even written of the devils that they "believe and tremble." (Acts viii. 13; James ii. 19.)

Is there not an unreal *love and charity*? Beyond doubt there is. There is a love which consists in words and tender expressions, and a great show of affection, and calling other people "dear brethren," while the heart does not love at all. It is not for nothing that St. John says: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Is there not unreal *praying*? Beyond doubt there is. Our Lord denounces it as one of the special sins of the Pharisees, that for a "pretence they made long prayers." He does not charge them with not praying, or with praying too shortly. Their sin lay in this, that their prayers were not real.

Is there not unreal *talking* about religion? Beyond doubt there is. Ezekiel describes some professing Jews, who talked and spoke like God's people "while their hearts went after their covetousness." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.)

How much even of evangelical religion is completely unreal! You will sometimes see men professing great affection for the pure "gospel," while they are practically inflicting on it the greatest injury. They will talk loudly of soundness in the faith, and have a keen nose for heresy. They will run eagerly after popular preachers, and can converse fluently about its leading doctrines. And yet these people in private are neither truthful, nor straightforward, nor honest, nor manly, nor good-tempered, nor unselfish, nor merciful, nor humble, nor kind! And

is such Christianity as this real? It is not. It is a miserable imposture, a base cheat and caricature.

Reader, I write these things with sorrow. But the times demand very plain speaking.

II. *Some tests by which you may try the reality of your religion.*

1. For one thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by *the place which it occupies in your inner man*. It is not enough that it is in your *head*. It is not enough that it is on your *lips*; it is not enough that it is in your *feelings*. Your religion, if it is real, and given by the Holy Ghost, must be in your *heart*. It must hold the reins, sway the affections, lead the will, direct the tastes. It must influence the choices and decisions. It must fill the deepest, lowest, inmost seat in your soul. Reader, is this your religion? (Acts viii. 21; Rom. x. 10.)

2. In the next place, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by *the feelings towards sin* which it produces. The Christianity which is from the Holy Ghost will always have a very deep view of the sinfulness of sin. It will not merely regard it as a blemish and misfortune, which makes men and women objects of pity and compassion. It will see in sin the abominable thing which God hates, the thing which makes man guilty and lost, in his Maker's sight, the thing which deserves God's wrath and condemnation. Above all, it will see in sin the thing which will ruin us eternally, except we can find a ransom; and destroy our happiness, both here and hereafter, except we fight against it, even unto death.

3. For another thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by *the feelings towards Christ* which it produces. Real religion will make a man glory in Christ, as the Redeemer, the Deliverer, the Priest, the Friend, without whom he would have no hope at all. It will produce con-

fidence in Him, love towards Him, delight in Him, comfort in Him, as the Mediator, the food, the light, the life, the peace of the soul. Reader, is this your religion? Do you know anything of feelings like these toward Jesus Christ? If not, you may well doubt whether your religion is real.

4. For another thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by *the fruit it bears in your heart and life*. The Christianity which is from above will raise in the man who has it repentance, faith, hope, charity, humility, spirituality, kind temper, self-denial, unselfishness, forgivingness, temperance, truthfulness, brotherly-kindness, patience, forbearance. The degree in which these various graces appear may vary in different believers. The seeds of them will be found in all who are the children of God. By their fruits they may be known. Reader, is this your religion? If not, you may well doubt whether it is real.

5. In the last place, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by *your feelings and habits about means of grace*. Prove it by the Sabbath. Is that day a season of weariness and constraint, or a delight and a refreshment? Prove it by the public means of grace. What are your feelings about public prayer, and public praise, about the public preaching of God's Word, and the administration of the Lord's Supper? Prove it by your feelings about private means of grace. Do you find it essential to your comfort to read the Bible regularly in private, and to speak to God in prayer? Or do you find these habits irksome, and either slur them over, or neglect them altogether?

Reader, if you would know whether your religion is real, genuine, and true, measure it by the five particulars which I have now named. Measure it fairly. Test it honestly. If your heart is right in the sight of God, you have no cause to flinch from examination. If it is wrong, the sooner you find it out the better.

I conclude by a direct application. I will draw my bow at a venture, and trust that God will bring an arrow home to the hearts and consciences of many.

1. *An inquiry.* I do not ask what you think about others. Perhaps you may see many hypocrites around you. You may be able to point to many who have no reality at all. This is not the question. You may be right in your opinion about others. But I want to know about yourself. Is your own Christianity real and true, or nominal and base? With the Bible in your hand, and honesty in your heart, the thing *may* be known. Then resolve to find it out.

2. *A warning.* I address it to all who know in their own consciences that their religion is not real.

An unreal Christianity is specially offensive to that great God with whom we have to do. And it is sure to fail a man at last. It will wear out. It will break down. It will supply no comfort in the hour when comfort is most needed.

3. *An advice.* I offer it to all who feel pricked in conscience by the subject of this tract. Reader, apply without delay to the Lord Jesus, and ask Him to become your Saviour, your Physician, your Priest, and your Friend. Let not the thought of your unworthiness keep you away. Never, never forget that Christ can cleanse you from any quantity of sins, if you only commit your soul to Him. But one thing He does ask of those who come to Him. He asks them to be real, honest, and true.

4. My last word shall be *encourage-*

ment. I address it to all who are honestly following Christ. Persevere. You may often find few with you, and many against you. You may often hear hard things said of you. You may often be told that you go too far, and that you are extreme. Heed it not;—press on. Believer in Christ, remember this! Whatever you do in religion, do it well. Be real. Be thorough. Be honest. Be true.

If there is anything in the world of which a man need not be ashamed, it is the service of Jesus Christ. Of sin, of worldliness, of levity, of trifling, of time-wasting, of pleasure-seeking, of bad temper, of pride, of making an idol of money,—of all this a man may be well ashamed. But of living for his soul, caring for his soul, making his soul's salvation the principal and chief thing in his daily life,—of all this a man has no cause to be ashamed at all. Believer in Christ, remember this!

The time is fast coming when nothing but reality will stand the fire. Real repentance towards God, real faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, real holiness of heart and life,—these, these are the things which will alone pass current at the last day. It is a solemn saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

Rev. J. C. Ryle.

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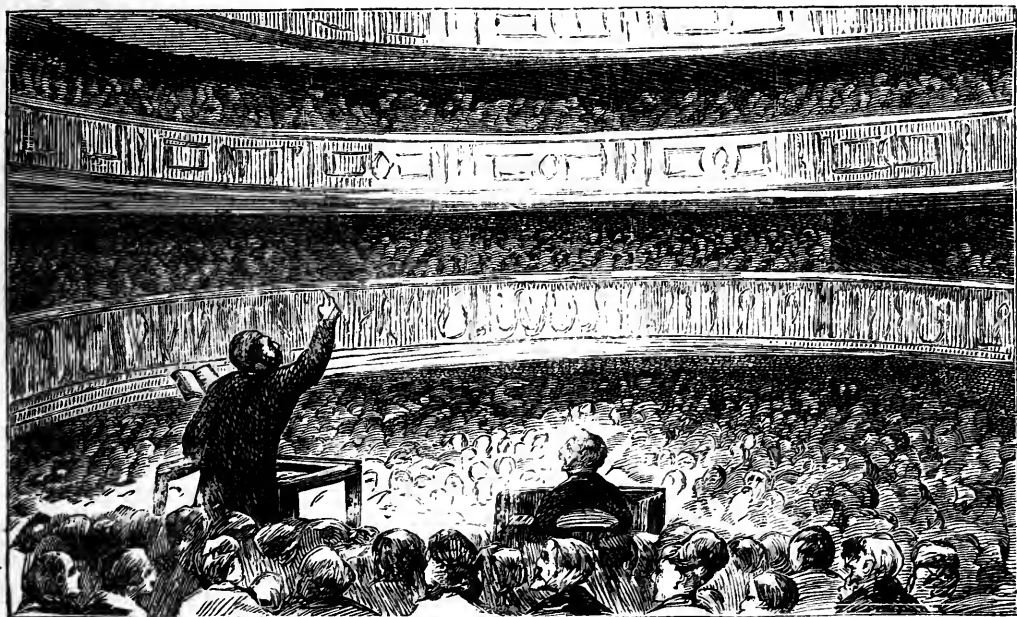
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JULY 1875.

THE GREAT AWAKENING.



Mr. Moody at the Haymarket Opera-House, London.

WE live in a wondrous time. When the *Monthly Visitor* told of the "Awakening in Scotland," some were still shaking their heads, and saying that it would soon come to nothing. Time has passed. All those fourteen months the work has been going gloriously forward. If it were mere human talk and excitement, men would not care. But when God and His word come home to the conscience, there are but two ways of it; either men will *yield*, or else they will harden themselves against Him. Blessed be God, multitudes *are* yielding. The glorious gospel of a free salvation, through the obedience and death of Jesus Christ for sinners, has, as of old, been saving and blessing thousands, in turning them away from their iniquities. (Acts iii. 26.) In many a home throughout Scotland, England, and Ireland, there is joyful evidence that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Cor. v.

17.) "Whole communities," writes the *Daily Telegraph*, "are reported to be stirred to the quick, and, the police say, actually altered for the better in habits and morals." The drunkard has become sober; the liar, truthful; the thief, honest; the hateful, kind and loving; the blasphemer, prayerful; prodigals have been brought home; earthly, sensual, hardened worldlings have become humble followers of Christ. It is vain to deny it. Men's hearts are being changed. And who can do that but God, by His word and Spirit? "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. vii. 20).

In places without number, all over the land, many are being converted. But it is in connection with two earnest men, Mr. D. L. Moody of Chicago, and his brother and "sweet singer," Mr. I. D. Sankey, that the work specially appears. Wherever they go with the word, the power seems to go with them. This is no longer matter of *opinion*, but of *fact*, unless hundreds upon hundreds of grateful witnesses, now walking in the light of the gospel, be all hypocrites, or under a delusion of the devil. In Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Liverpool, there were many true Christians—many bright lights burning, and many dim lights twinkling, before these evangelists came; but when they left, those cities, one after another, shone, spiritually, like an illumination after a victory.

On 18th October they began their work in Dublin. The population being so largely Roman Catholic, there was some anxiety lest it should be hindered. It was not so. The power of God seemed to be upon the city. The common people, Protestants and Roman Catholics, heard the word gladly; while, night after night, in the Exhibition Palace, some 12,000, of all classes, with solemnized eagerness listened to the gospel. Many professed to be converted, while even of the priests, some, it is said, became obedient to the faith. Bitter opposers were not

only disarmed of their prejudices, but were won in hundreds, not only to Christianity, but to Christ. While the work was at its height, a generous and ably written article, headed "Fair Play," appeared in one of the leading Roman Catholic newspapers, protesting against any ill-usage of Mr. Moody,—saying that no one could deny that he was seeking only the good of the people, and claiming for all, Protestant or Catholic, a right to attend the meetings if they had a mind.

The "service of song" has been greatly blessed. Many are attracted to the meetings by the singing of Mr. Sankey who would not otherwise go; and many, so far as man can judge, are brought savingly to Christ by the truths in these simple hymns. And the limpid gospel which many of them contains seems to fall like a penetrating dew upon old believers, making "their flesh come again like the flesh of a little child."

"Free from the blight of sorrow,
Free from my doubts and fears;
Only a few more trials,
Only a few more tears!
Jesus, my heart's dear refuge!
Jesus has died for me:
Firm on the Rock of Ages
Ever my trust shall be."

The power of the hymns, were it only in subduing men to an outward respect for the truth, has been appearing in strange ways. During the performance of the *Pantomime* at one of the Dublin theatres, a clown entered, saying, "I feel rather *Moody*!" The *pantaloon* rejoined, "And I feel rather *Sankey-monious*!" expecting, of course, to raise a laugh by their paltry puns. But they found their mistake. Instead of bursting into a roar, the gallery sent down a volley of *hisses* on the poor buffoons who thus, without anything to provoke it, let out their vulgar bitterness against those revered men of God; then instantly some one struck up, "*Hold the fort, for I am coming!*" the whole gallery joining in the chorus, to the consternation of clown, pantaloons, and all! The theatre does not like

such things. A Christian mother in Edinburgh said last winter, "I used to have such a business with the children when the *Pantomime* came—they were so anxious to get to it. But I never hear of it this winter. *They have got something better now!*"

From Dublin, Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey crossed to the great manufacturing districts of England. Some said, "They will make nothing of Manchester—worldly, money-hardened Manchester." Well, *they* made nothing of it, but God did, wondrously, through them. The city, in a fortnight, was moved to its very heart. Thence they went to Sheffield, and a fortnight after to Birmingham, multitudes being everywhere roused to concern about their souls and eternity. On 31st January they began their work in Liverpool. Here, too, especially among young men, the impression was as wide and deep. A hall for the meetings, holding, when crammed, some 10,000, was erected on purpose in forty days, at a cost of £3,500. Night after night this was filled to overflowing, besides meetings in other places. "We have never," writes an eye-witness, "felt so awed by the power of God, so affected by the love of Jesus, as when we saw and listened to those sixteen hundred young men and boys in 'Newsome's Circus.'"

On the 3d of March Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey held their first meeting in London. "It takes a great deal to move London." No doubt of it. To stand at mid-day at the "Mansion-House," and see that torrent of human beings rushing to and fro, makes one feel what a mighty matter it is to get London to listen about *anything*—even for a moment. When it was known that the evangelists were coming, some of the newspapers at once took alarm. One of the chief thought it worth while to write a "leader" as a warning to the people against those fanatics! What was it afraid of? It had heard that two humble strangers, who were "turning the world upside

down" wherever they went, were "coming hither also." The only arms they carried were a Bible and a hymn-book. But they also had about them what John Bunyan termed "a weapon called *all-prayer*," the most incomprehensible of all. And with these they were to march upon mighty London!—to attack the very headquarters, by beseeching men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God! The thing seemed ridiculous!—as foolish as the "rams' horns," or the shepherd boy's sling and stone. Did they really expect to be listened to?

But the newspapers were not all unfriendly. "What are these people," said another, "whom America has sent over? Wherever they come, vast edifices are filled to the skylights to hear them; the theatres are deserted, the ginshops emptied, the streets depopulated, and the very natures and habits of a work-a-day world seized and transformed by them into 'something new and strange.' They have already engaged in London the Agricultural Hall and Her Majesty's Opera-House in the Haymarket, by way of giving East and West an equal chance to attend this entertainment! But it is no entertainment at all. It is a *business*, apparently as earnest as death, and as serious as eternity." (*Daily Telegraph*, February 1875).

To London they came. "*All-prayer*" had been at work before them. God's people in thousands had been pleading for a blessing. Beginning on 3d March, within a week it was seen that it was not to be in vain. Multitudes, often far beyond the 20,000 packed into the "Agricultural Hall,"—from the beggar on the street to the Lord Chancellor of England,—crowded to listen to

"The old old story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love."

London is moved. "Moody and Sankey" is the present key-note of the street boys, who are good judges of what the city is taken up with. Every-

where they go shouting the sale of hymn-books, photographs, reports of addresses, etc. Omnibuses and tram-cars are placarded—"To Moody and Sankey's meetings." Three things seem already very plain: *first*, London knows that a servant of God wants to speak to it; *second*, London knows what the message is about; *third*, London is willing to listen. If these things be so in a city of four millions of people, how is it all to be accounted for? "Is not this the great power of God?" Think of a daily and nightly prayer meeting, attended by thousands, in "Her Majesty's Opera-House," in "The Haymarket,"—the very centre of the wealthy wickedness of London! Among those at that meeting on the 15th April was the Princess of Wales.

And if a change of life be sure evidence of a change of heart, hundreds upon hundreds have already believed, and turned to the Lord. A man who had spent twenty-one years, nearly half of his life, in prison, was awakened by hearing "*Hold the fort*" sung in the Agricultural Hall. In one place, the greatest swearer in the neighbourhood became converted. He at once said to his companions, "I want to tell you fellows that I've got a new master, and intend to follow religion; so if you intend to chaff me, you had better begin at once!" They did not chaff,—they wondered too much. But six of them speedily followed him into the kingdom of God. A tradesman was arrested by means of another who had been changed coming and paying an old debt. He too became a Christian. So the work goes on. With such cases, from all classes in the commu-

nity, a score of *Visitors* might easily be filled.

"What hath God wrought!" What a new, fresh brightness does not all this throw upon the power of the glorious gospel, as the true "rest for the weary!" What a call to praise, for the wonders done,—to prayer, that what has been wrought may be established, and that we may see yet greater things than these. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

And let there be no limit to our expectations of what God can do. It seems as if something like a spiritual earthquake were coming upon London, bringing salvation to thousands, and making the ears of men to tingle to the utmost parts of the earth. Reader! if yet out of Christ, do not *your* ears tingle while you read this wondrous story? Is this great tide of blessing to come in, *and to go out*, and leave *you* still without Christ, without hope? O brother, sister, make sure work! "Yet there is room." (Luke xiv. 22.) "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) How fearful if ever you should have to look back from a lost eternity, and to think that, during your lifetime on earth, thousands were saved by accepting *that very same offered Saviour* whom you rejected,—to your everlasting ruin! "Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke x. 11.)

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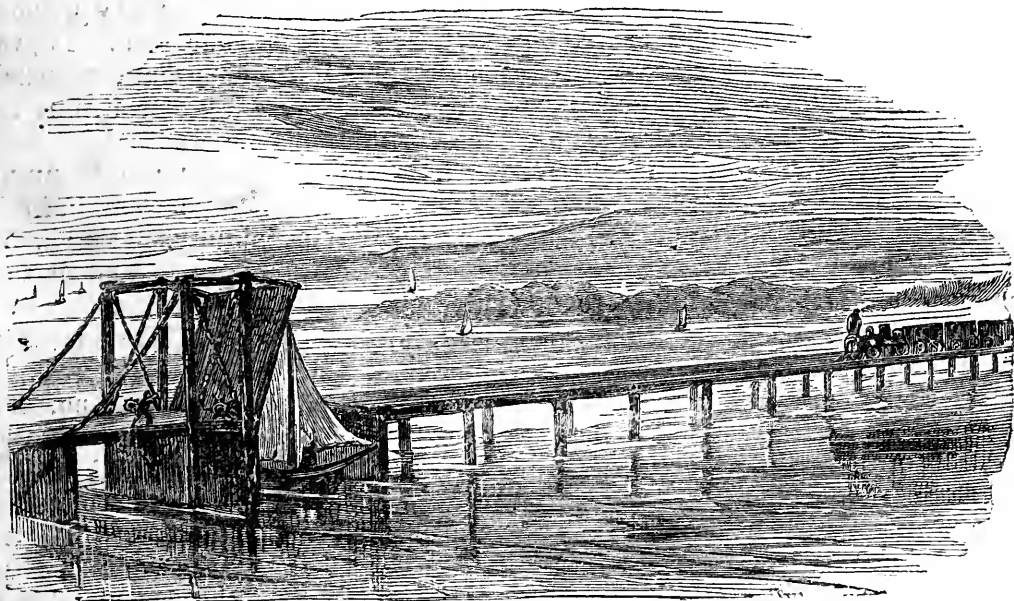
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1875.

YOU HAVE A SOUL!

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—MATT. XVI. 26.



"Oh! if only I had—!"

IN a State lunatic asylum of America, for years a wretched man has walked the same passage, and continually the same words come from his lips. If you address him, his eyes glare upon you as though they would start from their very sockets, and he shrieks in your ears, "*Oh! if only I had—if only I had— Oh! if only I had—!*"

Formerly he was a railroad watchman in charge of a drawbridge. He had been telegraphed to one day by

the superintendent of the line to keep the bridge closed, as a special train might be expected between certain hours, the exact time unknown. The watchman fully *intended* to obey orders, and rigidly refused many temptations offered by captains of vessels to induce him to let them pass. At length, however, a friend of his, the captain of a small craft, entreated him to open the bridge. His case was urgent; he would not be delayed; time was everything to him.

With considerable reluctance the watchman was prevailed upon to consent. He opened the bridge, and the vessel made ready to pass up the river, when a shrill whistle pierced his ears, and thrilled him with horror. The train swung round the curve, and was then making straight for the river. Oh! what would the watchman have given if only he had heeded the orders sent him from headquarters. But it *was now too late*.

The poor man threw up his hands and stood petrified to the spot, and in the anguish of his soul cried, "*Oh! if only I had—if only I had—I!*" Reason tottered, and he was from that hour a raving maniac; whilst the whole train, with its precious freight of passengers, was hurled down to its awful destruction, and hundreds of persons perished. One warning, but that warning unheeded! One order, but that order disobeyed! There was no lack of good intentions and good resolutions. But he thought there was *time enough*, and he risked it, and *lost all!*

A more terrible story of human anguish,—of neglect,—remorse,—un-availing repentance,—was perhaps never told. Reader! let it be to you like the ringing of a bell to awaken your conscience—to fix your attention upon what follows. That man trifled with a warning, and, for this life, *lost all*. You, if out of Christ, are yet in a more terrible danger. Does not that bitter cry ring in your ears as what may possibly yet be your own,—"*Oh! if only I had—I!*"?

1. YOU HAVE A SOUL.—How true are the words of the Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Reader, that frail body of yours is but the shell, is but the casket that contains the jewel. Yes; man, young or old,—woman, young or old,—boy,—girl,—*you have a soul*. Do you actually believe this? Do you take it home as a reality? Do you act as one who believes and fully realizes it? You know you have a body. It is cared for in every way. "What shall I put in it? what shall

I put on it?" forms the subject of much of your thoughts. Every hour you are seeking its gratification in some way or other. But how often do you think of your *soul*? How often have you thought of it to-day?

2. IT IS OF INFINITE VALUE.—It will never die. Your body shall fall into the earth, and become a part of it, but your soul shall still live. The world, with all its allurements, its vanities, its pleasures, shall pass away, but your soul shall still exist. Could you count the grains of sand upon the shore of every sea, and reckon every grain a year, yea, a million of years, that would not represent the duration of your soul. All the wealth of the world could not redeem your soul. The blood of God's only-begotten and well-beloved Son alone can do that; and surely this should tell you how precious in God's eyes is your soul. It was made for God's immediate presence. Hell was not prepared for it, but for the devil and his angels.

3. IT IS IN DANGER OF BEING ETERNALLY LOST.—We were born in sin, shapen in iniquity. (Ps. li. 5.) "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." (Isa. liii. 6.) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. iii. 10.) "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv. 46.) All these statements are the words of God. Is it not true, then, that your soul is in danger of being lost, and that eternally?

4. IT MAY BE ETERNALLY SAVED.—Were we to point out to you that in a certain place or position your body was in great danger, how quickly you would seek a place of safety! Well, then, your soul, which is infinitely more valuable than your body, is in great, very great danger, and we desire to point out to you how and where it will be for ever beyond the reach of danger. "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke xix. 10.) "God

so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." (John iii. 16-18.) "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Surely there, *there* is safety, eternal safety!

5. IT MAY BE ETERNALLY SAVED NOW.—"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) There is no promise for to-morrow. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." (Heb. iii. 15.) When Jesus called Matthew, he *at once* left all and followed Him. When Jesus told Zacchæus to come down from the tree, he made haste and obeyed; He received him joyfully, and *that day* salvation came to Zacchæus' house. (Luke xix. 9.) To the thief on the cross the Lord said in answer to his prayer, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) Saul of Tarsus gave instant heed to the voice from heaven, and the destroyer became a worker. One hour the jailor of Philippi was casting Paul and Silas into the inner prison, making their feet fast in the stocks; the next, he was crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" and being directed to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," he believes, and immediately gives evidence of the great change in washing their wounds and supplying their wants. (Acts xvi. 33.) Philip explained to the Ethiopian eunuch the things which he was reading concerning Jesus, and he went on his way rejoicing in the new-found Saviour. (Acts viii. 39.)

Dear reader, if yet out of Christ,

what hinders such a change being wrought in *you*, now, even while you read this? What, but only *your own unwillingness*? for God *waits* to be gracious. "Come, now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 18.) Israel's unbelief and procrastination cost them thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness. Yours, if continued an hour longer, may shut you out of heaven, and consign you to hell for ever. *Think of that*, dear friend, and put off no longer, but come to, believe in, *accept of Jesus now*, and live for ever.

6. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY WHEREBY IT CAN BE ETERNALLY SAVED.—Man has sought out many ways; God has only provided one. But it is all-sufficient. He whom the Father hath commanded us to hear said, "I am *the way, the truth, and the life*; no man cometh unto the Father, but *by me*." (John xiv. 6.) "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) These are the plain words of God. Do they not sweep away all our thoughts of being able to save ourselves, and shut us up to the question, *Have I Christ, or have I not?* "*This is the way. Walk ye in it.*"

7. THE WAY IS FREE, OPEN TO ALL.—There needs no pilgrimage to be undertaken, no penance to be performed, no number of prayers to be repeated, no bodily inflictions to be endured. There is no *doing* in the matter, so far as the ground of our acceptance is concerned. *All has been done by Jesus Christ, and you have only to take God at His word, and accept of Him as your substitute and surety.* The serpent-bitten Israelites did so. So soon as they were bitten, they looked, believing God's promise, to the serpent of brass lifted up upon the pole, and immediately the deadly effects of the fiery serpents' bite were counteracted, and they lived.

(Num. xxi. 9.) And so Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.) God's call is, Look unto Jesus, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.

And now, fellow sinner yet out of Christ, why are you still unsaved? Why does the wrath of God still abide on you, when a way of escape has been provided, when a pardon full and free has been offered you? You cannot, you dare not, lay the blame upon any one but yourself. You, and you only, are to blame. God thought of you from all eternity. He saw you lying in your blood. He knew that you could no more save yourself than the Ethiopian could change his skin, or the leopard his spots. His infinite justice demanded that you should die, but His infinite mercy made known a way whereby He might be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. That ransom was in the person of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Have you ever thought of what Jesus the Son of God became to save us? Think of Him who made the world, the sun, the moon, the stars, becoming a helpless babe, born in a stable and cradled in a manger,—a man having nowhere to lay his head—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Think of his hunger, his thirst, his loneliness, of what He suffered from friends and from foes, of his bloody sweat, of the mockings and scourgings, and the agonizing death of the cross which He endured. Oh! wondrous love, that suffered all this for sinners! Oh!

wondrous love, that still strives with you! Surely the Father's loving eye has followed you into the far country. Surely He has sent his Son to seek and save you. Time after time his Spirit has been striving with you, and you have turned a deaf ear to his entreaties; but yet once more He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) What if this be the last knock! O friend, for the love of your precious soul refuse not, lest, when it is TOO LATE, you have to cry that bitter cry, "*Oh! if only I had—! Oh! if only I had—!*"

Christian reader, you are saved; that is well, but do not rest there. Many of us are like the virgins in the parable, asleep while souls are perishing around us. Is it not high time for us to awake, and to redeem the time? Only He who spoke the words quoted at the beginning of this tract could rightly estimate the value of an immortal soul; but we who are in Him ought to be in sympathy with Him in the great work of saving souls, and doing something in our various spheres in pointing sinners to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) Out of the thousand million inhabitants of the world, sixty die every minute,—*one dies every second.* What multitudes are daily passing into eternity unsaved! Let us be up and doing, for the day is far spent, and the night is at hand, when no man can work.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1875.

COLONEL GARDNER,

WHO FELL AT PRESTONPANS, 1745.



Death of Colonel Gardner.

(See page 4.)

"I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" (Jer. xxxii. 27.) Who is there so far away from God that there remains no hope of his return? "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" Who is so guilty that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cannot cleanse him? *"Is there anything too hard for the Lord?"*

Colonel James Gardner, born in Linlithgowshire, in Scotland, was, in the early part of his career, a

reckless, dissipated soldier. His brother fell in battle, and his uncle also; his father died from exhaustion after a very severe campaign; but still the youth's heart was set on joining the army. Indeed, he was a man of war from his youth; for in the wild ardour of supposed honour, he, while little more than a boy, gloried in having fought three duels. Referring to these days in later years, when his heart had been changed, he quietly

replied to one who challenged him, "I fear sinning; you know I do not fear fighting."

He was born in 1688, the remarkable year of the Revolution that delivered this land from the Stuarts. A godly mother sought to lead him to Christ; but parental teaching seemed in vain, and providences made not even a temporary impression. On one occasion, when he was in France, his horse threw him over its head. In a storm on the coast of Holland he barely escaped. But the most wonderful deliverance of all was in 1706, at the battle of Ramilies, where he received a wound in his mouth,—a bullet passing through and through to the other side, leaving him bleeding and faint all night, with no one to bind up his wound or offer him relief. But none of these deliverances affected him; he went on in sin. His life was a life of self-indulgence, and even shameless licentiousness, although he found no real satisfaction. The emptiness of earthly pleasure and vice, with the occasional checks of conscience, at times left him so miserable, that he himself tells how, in the midst of merry company, when all present seemed to think him one of the happiest of men, his eye rested on a dog that strayed into the room, and he groaned inwardly, "Oh that I were that dog!"

But the God of sovereign grace had thoughts of mercy toward him. In 1719, in the month of July, this gay officer had spent a Sabbath in pleasure, continuing in the company of scoffers till late in the evening. He intended to finish the day's pleasure by a night of sensual enjoyment; but being left alone for an hour, he took up a book which had been put into his portmanteau by some praying friend (it is supposed to have been his mother) who cared for the prodigal in the far country. The title attracted him: "*The Christian Soldier; or, Heaven taken by Storm.*" As he turned over the pages, suddenly there seemed a blaze of light to fall upon the book,

which led him to lift his eye and look about. He does not seem to have known whether or not he was awake, or had fallen into a dream; but he thought he saw before him *Christ crucified*, with glory all around. As he gazed, he believed that he heard these words: "*O sinner, have I borne this for thee, and are these thy returns?*" Whether he was awake or asleep, this is certain, that hour was the beginning of a new life to his soul. He might have sung, as did John Newton in after days:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopt my wild career.

"I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eye on me,
As near His cross I stood."

That night the Holy Spirit gave him a view of his sinful life which filled him with horror and self-loathing. He saw his part in crucifying the Son of God; and his horrible ingratitude to God, who had given Christ, affected him most of all. He used afterwards to speak of that hour as the time when *he had that most astonishing sight of his blessed Lord*, and to add, that it was then he saw himself "*the vilest monster in the creation of God.*"

The Lord Jesus had indeed "appeared to him in the way." (Acts ix. 17-27.) But as Paul was kept three days, so Colonel Gardner was kept three months, without the Sun of Righteousness shining fully on his soul. The Lord is sovereign in His ways, giving clear light to some very quickly, and to others after a time. During three months Colonel Gardner went on without conscious joy. At the same time, he had beyond doubt been truly born again; and the very first dawning of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" (Tit. ii. 11) had this effect, that he no longer felt any craving for his old enjoyments; his sensual propensities seemed withered at the root that very night, though formerly he used to say

that "Omnipotence itself could not reform him without destroying his present body, and giving him another." Let drunkards hear this; let every man hear who fancies he cannot "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." This is God's way of opening the prison door, and striking off fetters from the prisoner of sin and Satan.

One day he was reading these words, in Romans iii. 25, 26: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare His righteousness; that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." At the reading of these words his burden fell off. He had feared during these three months that possibly God's justice might require the eternal damnation of so enormous a sinner as he had been, to make an example of him; but now he saw how divine justice was glorified by taking the substitute for the guilty. He told a friend that his joy was so great that for three nights he could not fall asleep; but the abundant refreshment he found in the favour of God was everything to him. For about seven years thereafter he scarcely felt any abatement in his joy.

Living now all for God, he "redeemed the time." He used to rise at four, and spend till six in reading the Word and prayer, and at evening sought to secure a season of retirement. If, on a march, he was required to be on horseback by four in the morning (as sometimes happened), he was known to be engaged at two in his usual devotions. A report soon spread that he was gone out of his mind. Some friends resolved to meet and talk with him; but he so calmly and solemnly stated his experience, and pressed on their attention the consideration of eternal realities, that one of the company ended the interview by saying, "Come, let us call another cause; we thought *this man mad*, and he is proving in good earnest *that we are so*."

It would have been interesting to give testimonies to his noble character from Dr. Calamy, of London, and especially from Dr. Doddridge, of Northampton, who became very intimate with him. Indeed, the seat in which Colonel Gardner used to sit is pointed out in Dr. Doddridge's church to this day. Wherever his regiment was sent, he sought out the people of God in the place, and delighted to sit at the Lord's table with them. On one such occasion, at Portpatrick, in 1725, he wrote to a friend that "he had much better reason to remember God from the hills of Portpatrick, than David from the land of Jordan and the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar."

Let us remember he was a soldier. He was present in almost every important battle in Flanders under the Duke of Marlborough. To give details of battles, however, is not our object, we rather mention the Colonel's care of his men; for he used to visit each, and speak to each of salvation, and the necessity of a personal interest in Christ. The awakening at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1741 seemed to prepare God's people for the trial that soon came over the land. Colonel Gardner took a deep interest in these seasons of revival. He wrote to Dr. Doddridge, how in little more than a fortnight "a hundred and thirty souls had been led to Christ on a sudden," and says, "This is a matter of eternal praise that will rejoice your very soul." Speaking of one of the ministers who had been the instrument of these awakenings, and who had been meeting with the contempt of the ungodly, he exclaimed: "I had rather be that despised man, an instrument in the hand of the Spirit in converting so many souls, and building up so many in their holy faith, than the emperor of the whole world." He gloried in whatever set on high the free grace of God and the atoning work of Christ.

About that time he had been appointed to a regiment of dragoons in Scotland, quartered near Bankton,

his own home. It seemed as if he were to be allowed the advantages of a quiet time in his native land; but rumours of evil soon disturbed this short peace. In 1745 the Rebellion broke out; the Pretender, Charles Edward, had landed, and was at the head of an army. Colonel Gardner was ordered to join Sir John Cope at Dunbar, which he did with some forebodings, saying to his wife as he took farewell, "We have an eternity to spend together." The incapacity of Sir John Cope, and his hasty, ill-judged retreat, spread a sort of panic among his troops; and in these circumstances the battle of Prestonpans was fought, September 21, 1745. Early in the engagement the Colonel was wounded by a bullet in his left breast, which made him spring in his saddle, but he refused to leave the field. With only fifteen of his dragoons around him he resisted the enemy; and seeing a party of foot without an officer, rode up to them and addressed encouraging words to them. As he was in the act of speaking, a Highland soldier in the rebel army reached a stroke at his right arm with a scythe on a pole, giving such a deep wound that the Colonel's sword dropt out of his hand. At that same moment others of the rebels joined in the attack, dragging him off his horse, while one gave the mortal blow, either with a broadsword or a Lochaber axe, on the back part of his head.

His servant found him two hours after the battle still breathing, and carried him to the manse of Tranent, where he expired. It is said that his horse was mounted by Prince Charles, who rode on it to Derby. As he lay

on the field dying, he was heard to say to a rebel chief, "You are fighting for an earthly crown; I am going to receive a heavenly one." And now any one that travels that way may read upon a monument erected at the spot where he fell, near Prestonpans, not far from Edinburgh, the inscription, legible from the railway, that tells of this soldier of Christ resting in the grave till the Lord come.

He obtained a "good report," and it was all "through faith." Till he looked to Jesus he was a servant of sin, immoral and vile. But the Spirit who works the new nature in a soul visited him, and led him to the cross; and, fellow sinner, "*there is nothing too hard for the Lord*,"—no sin that cannot be blotted out by the blood of Jesus,—no heart so hard, so unbelieving, so impure, that the Spirit cannot renew.

Do you wonder that he continued to be a soldier to the end of his life? If a man's profession be a lawful one, it may be best for him to continue where he is, and there witness for Christ. Nicodemus did not give up his seat in the Council, nor did Joseph of Arimathea become an apostle. The jailor of Philippi was not advised to resign his situation; the saints in Cæsar's household continued there. Wherever God's grace has found you, ask if that be not the best sphere of labour for you? There is something significant in the commendation of the Master to the Church of Pergamos: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name." (Rev. ii. 13.)

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NOVEMBER 1875.

"I SEE! I SEE!"



IN the summer of 1860 I was returning one morning from preaching at S—— to my home at C——, on foot.

Soon after leaving S——, on turning round, I saw a man coming, who appeared to be an old tramp. In a minute or two he was by my side. His shoes were slung over his shoulder, and his feet were but half protected by a pair of old carpet slippers. He had already walked ten miles, and on my asking him where he was going, he

said, "*For Keighley wide o' Bradford,*" and that he would have gone by rail, but had not money enough. I soon learned from him the outlines of his past history. He was the more free, perhaps, as he did not know me to be a minister. Seeing a small bag in my hand, he supposed I gained a livelihood by "selling bits of things."

I asked, "How old are you, my friend?"

"Turned seventy, master," said he.

"Well, have you any prospect of a better world?"

"There's nothing for me but heaven," he replied, in tones of great assurance.

"Indeed," I said; "what makes you so sure of that?"

"Oh, I've never done no harm, and have always done all the good I could. There can be nothing else for me."

"If what you say be true," I observed, "what shall I do? I have not done all the good I could, but have done a great deal of harm. I have been very bad indeed."

"Have you, master? You don't look like one of that sort."

"You must not take people by their look. I have been so bad that I have broken the whole law of God; have been guilty of very great crimes—even murder, more than once or twice."

This statement quite alarmed the old man; he stood fixing his eyes upon me for a few seconds, and then said, "How is it you are here, then?"

"Oh, we do not always get what we deserve, or I should not be here. You see I am not like you; now what must I do?"

Evidently pitying my case, he exclaimed, "Eh, master, I'm capped with it; I don't know what you can do. I can see nothing for it but your turning to be better for the future; then you won't have so many stripes, you know. The Bible says some have few stripes and some many."

"Where do they go to get the stripes?" I asked.

"Oh," said the old man seriously, "to hell."

"And when they have had their stripes, do they come out again?"

"Nay, they stay there for ever."

"Well, but I do not want to go to hell at all; I want to go to heaven. Can't you tell me how I can get there?"

"Nay, master, I can't. But it isn't true, is it, that you have been so bad?"

Pausing for a minute, and looking him full in the face, I very seriously said, "It is true; and I tell you, *you are quite as bad*, and I can prove it."

With a mingled look of surprise and anger, he earnestly replied, "I'm sure I'm not."

"*You are*; and I can prove it from God's own word. In the Epistle of James it says, '*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*' (James ii. 10). Now tell me candidly, have you ever been tipsy?"

"I've got a sup too much sometimes."

"Have you ever taken God's name in vain?"

"I can't say but I have."

"I dare say you have cursed and swore at times?"

"Yes, I have. I can't deny it."

"You have not spoken the truth always?"

"No, not always."

"Without going any further, you see you have offended in many points; therefore you have broken the whole law of God, and a great many times, too. Just think what another passage says, '*Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them*' (Gal. iii. 10). Now you see by this, that if you had offended but once in all your life, you are under a curse. Now, have you ever been angry with any one, and hated them in your heart?"

He acknowledged he had.

"Then," I said, "in the sight of God you have been guilty of murder; for it says in His word, '*He that hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*'" (1 John iii. 15).

It was evident that light was dawning upon his mind, as at this stage of the conversation he wonderingly inquired, "Eh, is it like that?"

"Yes," I said; "and now go back in your mind, and try to recollect your past life, and tell me if you have ever really loved God, for the greatest commandment in the Bible is, '*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy*'

soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37, 39).

"Well, I've said my prayers to Him sometimes."

"When have you done that, my friend?"

"Oh, when I've been going on the road, I've said, 'Lord, help me through to-day,' and He has done it."

"And have you thanked Him?"

"Yes, I have."

"Now, do you think you would have asked Him to help you if you had not been afraid you would not have had enough to eat?"

"No, I don't think I should."

"That is not loving God; that's loving yourself. Let me ask one more question. When God has helped you, and you have thanked Him, have you studied afterwards how to please Him, or have you forgotten Him until you were in want again?"

This probing had its designed effect. His conscience became restless, and he began to see things in a different light to that in which he had before seen them. Believing that the Holy Spirit, according to the word of Jesus, was *convincing him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come* (John xvi. 8), I endeavoured to show him that God's law required perfect obedience; that by the works of the law no man living can be justified; that the penalty of violating the law of God was eternal death; that the review of his long life clearly showed that he had in fact rendered no obedience at all; that all *his righteousness was as filthy rags*; that his heart had never been right in the sight of God. While thus undeceiving him as to his hopes and false confidence, it was most affecting to witness his emotions. They became more and more intense, till at length, trembling and bursting into tears, he sobbed out, "Eh, master, *I'm as bad as you! I'm as bad as you! What shall we do? Oh, what shall we do?*"

I could not refrain from weeping too as I beheld this aged sinner. The

staff on which he had leaned all his hopes for the future was suddenly broken, and his expectations of rest and happiness were changed into "*a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation*" (Heb. x. 27). He deeply felt his position—so soon to enter eternity, and so unprepared. His spirit was overwhelmed. His heart was broken. He was literally "ready to perish."

"Cheer up," said I, "I know what we can do."

"Do ye, master?" said he, with an earnestness that betokened great concern. He felt there was not a moment to spare.

"Yes; we must look to the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard of Him, haven't you?"

"Yes; didn't He die upon the cross?"

"He did, and was buried; and He rose again, and went back to heaven, and is now seated upon His throne there. He loves sinners such as you and me, and He says to us, '*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*' (Matt. xi. 28); '*Look unto me, and be ye saved*' (Isa. xlv. 22). All we have to do is to look unto Him, and trust in Him, and we shall have the forgiveness of all our sins; and He will give us the Holy Spirit to make us holy and happy, and then take us to heaven."

The announcement that salvation is the free gift of Christ, to all who come to Him, seemed to the old man "too good to be true;" I therefore added, "I am sure of it, for I have been to Him."

With a look of surprise he said, "Have you?"

"Yes, and found it just as Jesus said. I had been very miserable for some weeks, and was very much like what you are now. I felt myself a great sinner; my whole life had been very bad, and my heart very wicked. I saw I could not help myself. Do what I would, I had no rest or peace,

day or night, till one evening I went into my father's garden to be alone with God; and I thought how gentle He was; what great things He had done; how holy He was; how righteous and just; how good to His creatures, even to those who had sinned against Him; how good He had been to me. And then I thought of His great love, in giving His own beloved Son to die for sinners, that they might be saved. I thought of the wonderful love of Jesus in coming from heaven to suffer so much on our behalf; and as I said to myself, *He loved me, and gave Himself for me*, I felt my whole heart filled with love to Him; and looking up, I said, 'I do believe in Thee,' and in a moment I was very happy. And I now expect to go to heaven, not because I have been good, for I have been very bad, as I told you, but *because of what Jesus did and suffered for me.*"

These simple words the poor old convinced sinner listened to with fixed attention, and he said, with hope glistering in his eye, "D'ye think He will save an old sinner like me?" "I am sure He will. It is His work to save. It is just what He delights to do. He saves all that come to Him; for it is said, '*He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them*' (Heb. vii. 25). And again, '*Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out*' (John vi. 37). '*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and*

the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all' (Isa. liii. 5, 6). '*He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*'" (1 Pet. iii. 18). As I opened and explained these passages, and showed him that salvation is in Christ, that Jesus had done and suffered all for us, and had left us nothing to do or suffer, his countenance brightened, and with much animation he frequently exclaimed, "I ne'er saw it like that before." As we discoursed further on this glorious theme, the old man would stop, as if lost in thought, and then resuming the walk, would say, "I see! I see!" How true it is that "*the entrance of God's word giveth light!*"

Presently, making a dead halt, and striking the ground with his stick, he said, with great emphasis and joy: "*Bless Him! He will save me! I do love Him! I do that! I do believe in Him!*"

After a pause he said, "*To think I should have met you this morning; it seems as if you had been sent on purpose.*"

"Yes; and to think of the love of the LORD JESUS in meeting you, and making you happy."

We had now about a mile and a half to walk ere we parted. We could neither speak nor think of aught but Jesus, and what He had done for us.

I offered him my hand. He took it, and said, "We shall soon be in heaven, and I shall know you again when we are there. I can't be long here; I shall know you when you come." Then joyfully alluding to our blessed Saviour, he said, "*Bless Him! Bless Him!*" and we parted.

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

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12 vols

MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1875.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



ONE winter night, some years ago, shortly after the opening of the Caledonian Railway, an express train came up to a station some thirty miles from the terminus. It was behind time. The engine-driver, who seemed excited by drink, declared that he would make up the lost time on the road, and have the train in town by the appointed hour. "You cannot be in town to-night by half-past nine o'clock," was the remonstrance of one standing by.

"By half-past nine o'clock I shall either be in town, or in hell!" was the unhallowed answer.

The train drove on. It was put to a fearful speed. A few minutes after leaving the station, while flying along the new-laid rails, at a place where the line passed over swampy ground, the carriages began to roll from side to side. A few moments—as described to us by a friend who felt it—of dizzy, swinging, sickening motion; a terrific

crash, like the exploding of a mine; and passengers, carriages, and luggage lay strewn like a wreck along the line. Where was the engine-driver? Engine and driver were buried many feet deep in the moss. In the twinkling of an eye the man was in eternity.

Awful example, of a wicked man taken at his word, and driven away in his wickedness! "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18.) Well may such a question startle the sleeper, and lead him to ask, Where am I going?

Reader, *where are you going?* We cannot hear your answer. It would not reach us though you answered with the voice of a trumpet. But God knoweth. He knows the fear, perhaps the enmity, which this question rouses, whether you confess it in words or no. He knows you altogether. He knows every action, even your very thoughts. He knows which way you are going.

Another incident, scarce less striking, though it was not brought to such a speedy and fearful ending, is as follows:—

"Is there a gentleman here of the name of —?" shouted a porter at the — railway station, looking inquiringly into one of the carriages.

"Yes, my name is —," returned a youth who had just thrown himself into a corner of the carriage.

"Where are you going, sir?"

"To hell," he abruptly replied, angry at being troubled with a second question; and with an irritable movement he stepped upon the platform to look after his luggage. His fellow-passengers gave an involuntary shudder, but made no remark.

It was an evening in June. A drizzling rain fell, to the discomfort of the travellers, who, though enjoying all the conveniences that money could purchase, felt its depressing influence on their spirits. Varied were the feelings of the individuals who were now being rapidly whirled along to their several destinations. Some seemed bent on

pleasure; others absorbed in business. Some, probably, full of hope at the prospect of rejoining their dearest friends; whilst others were perhaps obeying the mournful summons which called them to the chamber of sickness and the home of sorrow.

One of the occupants of the carriage which the youth had entered was a minister of the gospel. He had heard the dreadful assertion the young traveller had made, and fearing that it was too true, he determined to warn him of his danger.

The young man's appearance was interesting. His handsome face had a fixed look of sadness. A hectic flush came and went upon his cheek; his eye shone with the unnatural brightness of consumption, and his tall form was wasted by his distressing disease. He was, indeed, a sad example of the uncertainty of life, even in its spring-time. Still there was something about him that called forth the sympathy of the beholder.

The minister was not sufficiently near for a private conversation; he therefore forbore to make any personal remark till an opportunity should offer for a change of seat.

About midnight, the train stopped at —, and the travellers alighted to partake of refreshment.

"When do you expect to arrive at the end of your journey, my young friend?" inquired the minister with an expressive look, when the train was again in motion, and he was seated by the side of the youth.

"I hope to do so the day after tomorrow," he replied. "I am on my way to —, and shall cross to — in the morning; my physicians think that possibly change of air will improve my health."

"I don't mean that; I referred to the place to which you told the porter you were going."

The youth remembered the language he had made use of, and felt too much confused to reply. His companion then commenced a conversation on

religious subjects; he endeavoured to point out the difference between the religion of the world and religion as it is presented in the word of God, in all its solemn bearing on the interests of the soul; urging the need for a personal application to that Saviour whom it reveals, as the only means of averting the wrath of God and making salvation sure. The young man listened with an intensity of interest which awakened hope that his words were making an impression.

The young man appeared deeply grateful to his faithful companion, and parted from him with evident regret, promising, as he did so, to purchase a Bible and to study it daily, with prayer, that he might acquaint himself with that salvation to which he had hitherto been a stranger.

They have not met since that hour. Perhaps they will never again meet on earth. Let us hope that the impressions then made did not prove like the seed that fell in the stony places, which appeared for a little and then withered away; but rather that the blessing of God attended the effort which was made to arrest the attention of a soul to its danger and its refuge. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. xv. 23.)

Traveller to eternity! as the minister that night met the young man in the railway carriage, this tract now meets you, and asks, Where are *you* going? Do not deem this an uncalled-for question; it is a question of vital importance, and is put from a true interest in your welfare. There are but two ways,—the broad road that leadeth to destruction, the road to *hell*; and the narrow way that leadeth unto life, the way to *heaven*. Time is rapidly bearing you along one or other of these roads, and death is the station at which you will stop. Is not, then, the question of momentous importance—Which of these ways am I going? on which of these roads am I travelling?

Perhaps you are young, and have but just commenced the journey of life.

Still, death may, before you have advanced much farther, overtake you in your progress. In an instant an accident may occur which may send you at once into an unseen world. The present moment is all that you can call your own; the next you may be ushered into the presence of God.

A few nights previous to that on which the above-related incident occurred, an accident on the same line caused a fearful loss of life. Some of the travellers were singing Kenn's beautiful evening hymn. They had reached the third verse—

"Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious at the awful day;"

and they had scarcely finished the last line, ere some of them were, without a moment's notice, swept into eternity.

Reader, had you been among the number, where would you now have been? Would you have been taken at once to glory, or been plunged that instant into everlasting woe?

Your state will be irrevocably *fixed* at the moment of death. The whole tenor of our Lord's teaching,—of His promises, of His threatenings,—and the arguments employed by His apostles, lead us inevitably to the conclusion, that, great as the change is which death produces, it produces no change in the moral and spiritual condition of a man. What he is at the moment of death, he will be through all eternity.

If, with an eye fixed on Christ, you are looking for forgiveness only through what He has done and suffered,—if, having no righteousness of your own, your desire is that of the apostle, to be "found in Christ, not having your own righteousness," but "the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9),—if, constrained by His love to your soul, and taught by His Spirit, you are desiring to "be holy as He is holy" (1 Pet. i. 16); then the more you look into your ground of hope for eternity, the more happy and

safe will you feel yourself. But if you discover that you are still treading the broad road, suffer a kind word of warning. "To-day,"—"lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,"—"to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iii. 13, 15.) Christ Himself invites you to come to Him. CHRIST saith unto *you*, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John iii. 15, 17.) Do not put off this matter till "a more convenient season." "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. xxvii. 1.) Off-putting has been the ruin of thousands; and "how shall *you* escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3.)

Were you travelling on urgent business, you would not rest contented if told that you had got into the wrong carriage, and that instead of getting nearer to the place you desired to reach, you were being carried in the very opposite direction. The discovery of such a mistake would lead to instant steps for having it put right. And why should it be otherwise in regard to your soul? Why, if all things tell you that you are under a mistake as to your eternal interests,—why should you rest satisfied under an error which must end in the utter ruin of your soul?

We once travelled with a person who had been, by mistake, taken on to a wrong destination. It was the last train that night, and he required, for pressing business, to be at the place he should have stopped at before he could reach it by the first train back next morning. There was no other conveyance, and he had to set out on foot on his weary and needless journey. A little time and a little toil made up for the error he had committed. But, O reader! if *you* find, when life is over, that you have been all wrong—that you have missed the end of your existence—what will you do? "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgment.*" (Heb. ix. 27.) *Once* to die! and after this the judgment. If we die wrong, no coming back to die right; no time, no toil will avail. Death closes the record of our life, and seals it up for judgment. In this sense, "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. xxii. 11.)

Traveller to eternity! for a moment stop—think—decide. *Stop*, in the hurry and engagements of life, to weigh well your eternal state. *Think*, on what you are, whither you are going, and how you ought to act. *Decide*, that in whatever direction your steps have led hitherto, *now* they shall, by the grace of God, be toward God—heaven—eternal life—through Jesus Christ. There is yet encouragement for *you*. The Saviour hath said: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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THE HALDANES.



ROBERT and JAMES ALEXANDER HALDANE were of the ancient and honourable family of the Haldanes of Gleneagles, in Perthshire. The elder, Robert, was born in London, 28th February 1764; the younger, James Alexander, at Dundee, on the 14th July 1768. Their father at one time commanded an East Indiaman. They had a godly mother. The elder brother never forgot how she used to kneel by their bed, when she thought they were asleep, and pray that the Lord would guide them while they lived, and afterward receive them to glory.

Their mother died before her younger son was six years old. For some time after her death, they both seemed impressed with divine things. James tells us of himself, that from thirteen to sixteen he became more careless, and learned to be a Sabbath-breaker and swearer.

As each of the youths reached the

age of seventeen, they entered the naval service of their country. In the very first action in which Robert was engaged, he attracted the attention of his commander by the skill and daring with which he directed the guns under his charge. On the peace of 1783 he left the navy, and never again entered it. He then retired to his paternal estate of Airthrey, near Stirling.

James Haldane went to sea as mid-shipman in an East Indiaman, five years after Robert. On one occasion, when ordered aloft to take in sail in a storm, the captain called to him to stop till an able seaman had gone up first. The seaman was in a few minutes struck on the head, and fell overboard and perished. He never forgot the look of that drowning sailor, who, he used to tell, was the only true Christian he had ever met with while at sea. The prepared was taken—the unprepared was left. During the same voyage, he made a narrow escape from drowning. He fell overboard from a boat, and was saved by clinging to an oar. For some time after he sailed, he still kept up a form of religion; but all was gone ere the ship returned, when he was ready to plunge with all his heart into the gaieties of London life.

During one of his voyages he was supposed by all to be dying. His life was spared; but he was soon in other dangers. Returning from India, the ship was crowded with passengers, and among them a cavalry officer, “a notorious shot,” and one who in a duel had already killed an adversary. A quarrel arose between him and Mr. Haldane, which was to be settled by a duel. They and their seconds went secretly ashore at St. Helena for this murderous purpose. They fired on each other at twelve paces distant. Mr. Haldane’s pistol burst, a fragment wounding him in the face. His enemy’s missed fire. The seconds interfered, and it was declared that they had received “satisfaction.”

At twenty-five, he was appointed to the command of the “Melville Castle”

Indiaman. He married; but instead of sailing, as he expected, in January 1794, he was detained till the month of May. While waiting in the Downs, a mutiny broke out in the ship “Dutton.” Captain Haldane, cutlass in hand, boarded the ship, and soon cleared the quarter-deck. Descending to the powder magazine, he found two of the crew half-drunk, the one wrenching the iron bars from the door, the other with a shovel of burning coals ready to throw in and sweep all on board into eternity. Captain Haldane put a pistol to the breast of the man who was breaking the door, had them both laid in irons, and returned to his own ship.

While the “Melville Castle” was detained by contrary winds, having more time for reflection, he began to study the word of God; and after examining the evidences of Christianity, he became fully convinced of its truth. And an opportunity of resigning his command having occurred, he relinquished his prospects of worldly wealth, and came to reside in Edinburgh, an anxious inquirer after salvation. Thus the gracious Lord was fastening the cords of love around him, and gently drawing him to Himself.

One passage of Scripture,—“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job xlii. 5, 6),—showed him how little he had ever truly known what it was to be a sinner; and he set out in search of this knowledge as a way of getting peace to his soul. “My desire,” he says, “was set upon frames and feelings, instead of building on the sure foundation. (1 Cor. iii. 11.) I got no comfort in this way. Gradually becoming more dissatisfied with myself,—being convinced especially of the sin of unbelief,—I wearied myself with wishing for some wonderful change to take place,—some inward feeling by which I might know that I was born again. The method of resting simply on the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus Christ,

was too plain and easy; and, like Naaman the Syrian, instead of bathing in Jordan and being clean, I would have some great work in my mind to substitute in place of Jesus Christ. . . . Instead of those deep convictions which are experienced by some with much horror of mind, the Lord has rather shown me the evil of sin in the sufferings of His dear Son, and in the manifestation of that love which, whilst it condemns the past ingratitude, seals the pardon of the believing sinner."

During the ten years James was living to himself at sea, Robert was living to himself on his estate at Airthrey, as a country gentleman. But for him, too, better days had now come. Startled from his sleep of spiritual death by the excitement of the first French Revolution, he too began to ask the way to Zion, with his face thitherward. "Having nothing to rouse my mind," he afterwards wrote, "I lived in the country, selfishly enjoying the blessings which God in His providence had so bountifully poured upon me. As to religion, I contented myself with that general profession which is so common. I endeavoured to be decent, and what is called moral, but was ignorant of my lost state by nature, as well as of the strictness, purity, and extent of the divine law. While I spoke of a Saviour, I was little acquainted with the need I stood in of the atoning efficacy of His pardoning blood, or of the imputation of His perfect obedience and meritorious righteousness, and of the sanctifying influence of the eternal Spirit to apply His salvation to my soul."

With Robert, as with James, no particular instrumentality seemed to be used by God in bringing him to the saving knowledge of the truth, though he was helped by many ministers and grds. A friend of God, with whom he often, were of counsel, was the late veneration. James of Edinburgh.

Can an imae look at those devoted men, and doubt the reality of the change of heart which takes place when a person becomes truly a believer? With

everything to lose and nothing to gain by the change, in a worldly point of view, they nevertheless counted all things but loss that they might win Christ, and be found in Him. And remember, they were no weak-minded enthusiasts. Even before their conversion, they were unmistakeably men of no common courage, strength of purpose, and manly decision of character.

Robert Haldane yearned over India. Burning with love for the souls of her heathen, he gave himself up to the Lord, to leave country and kindred that he might go to preach Christ to the benighted millions of Bengal. He was joined in the plan by Dr. Innes and Mr. Greville Ewing, and by Dr. Bogue of Gosport. And that his mission might have means, and not be overchargeable to any, "having land, he sold it." He parted with beautiful Airthrey, and laid the money at the feet of Christ.

But the Lord had other work for his servant to do. His hopes toward India were brought to an end by the East India Company resolutely refusing to permit or sanction the scheme. But with such talents, in grace and in providence, entrusted to them, neither Robert nor James could remain idle.

Toward the close of last century, the state of godliness in Scotland was very low. Hindered from his purpose toward the heathen abroad, Robert Haldane's love and zeal, as well as those of his brother, turned toward the heathen at home. At Gilmerton, a colliery village near Edinburgh, James first opened his mouth in public to preach the gospel. About this time, when crossing the High Street, a man stopped him, and, holding out his hand, said, "Oh, sir, I am glad to see you." Mr. Haldane said he did not know him. The man replied, with tears in his eyes, "Ah, sir, but I know you! for you preached the gospel to me at Gilmerton." Accompanied by John Campbell, the celebrated African traveller, who had been his companion at the High School, he then made a tour in the west, everywhere preaching the

word, promoting Sabbath schools, and distributing tracts. In the course of his first journey, he was the means of beginning sixty Sabbath schools. During a tour through the north, great multitudes heard him gladly, and many souls were gathered to Christ. It was a new thing, in places where spiritual death had reigned, to see an East India captain, in coloured clothes, joyfully enduring persecution and reproach, often at the hands of ministers and magistrates, for the love he bore to the souls of men. Passing through Perth, Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Nairn, Forres, and Inverness, he proceeded to Orkney, where, among the fruits of his labours, was the conversion of an old man of ninety-two years of age. And in Edinburgh, on the Calton Hill, and in all the villages around, he ceased not to preach and to teach Jesus Christ.

The brothers went hand in hand in every good work. They were honoured of God to begin and carry on a movement in Scotland, which resembled in many respects the wide-spread revivals in England in the times of Whitefield and Wesley. The courage and energy which James had shown in his youth, he had often ample need for in those glorious gospel campaigns. On one occasion he was marched through Kintyre as a prisoner, under a guard, to the Sheriff of Argyll. The result was the confusion of his enemies, and the greater and greater flocking of the people to hear the word of life from his lips.

In the training of godly young men for the ministry, the building of "missionary churches" in remote localities, and on similar objects, Mr. Robert

Haldane, during the ten years following his conversion, spent no less a sum than £40,000. Another scheme of great and wide-spreading usefulness was his preaching and teaching among the students at Geneva. Of the twenty-five whom he taught, the greater part became converted men, and faithful ministers of Christ in France and Switzerland. Among the spiritual fruits of his teaching at that time were the late well-known Merle D'Aubigné and Frederick Monod. Abounding in labours, and their path like the shining light, they both lived to a good old age. Robert departed to his rest in his seventy-ninth year, on the 12th December 1842. James died at Edinburgh on the 8th February 1851, at the age of eighty-three. Many devout men followed him to his burial, amid the tears of not a few, and the respect and regret of all.

They have not lived in vain. Reader! what do their lives say to *you*? See in this history another proof that THE GREAT CHANGE is not a fancy or a dream. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Their safety, their happiness, their usefulness, began only when, as lost sinners, they fled for refuge to Jesus Christ. Will *ye* not come to Him, that ye might have life? Now that their lives and labours for Christ are over, were they in the right, or in the wrong?

To the people of God, the example they have left behind them is full of encouragement. Whether poor in this world, or, like the Haldanes, high in birth and in influence, let us not be "weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

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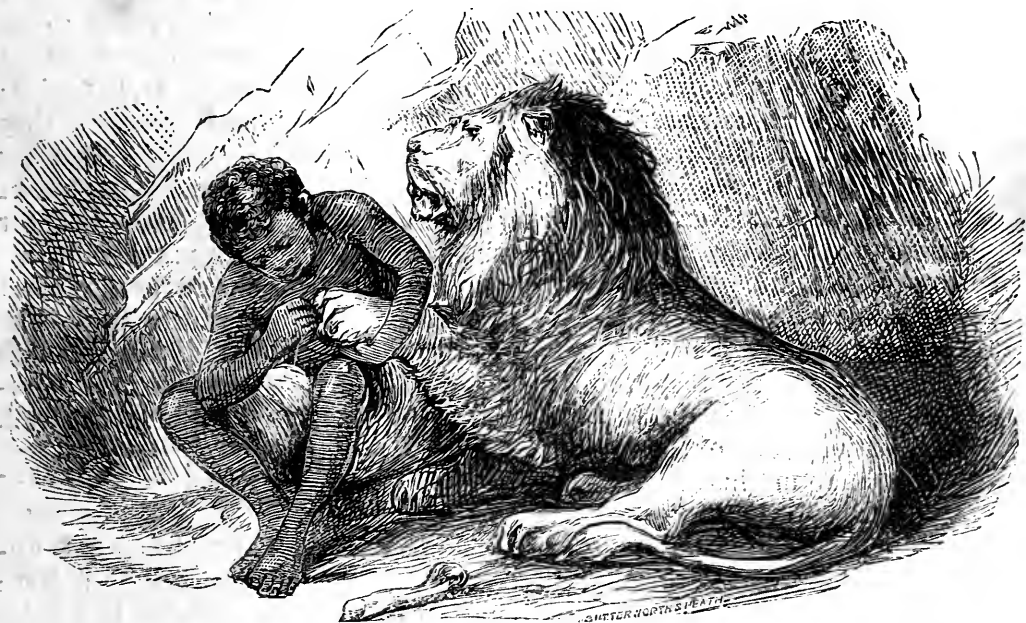
SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1876.

MAN AND HIS INGRATITUDE.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."—JOHN i. 11.



See page 3.

I. THE PEOPLE AMONG WHOM OUR LORD DWELT WERE GUILTY OF INGRATITUDE TOWARDS HIM.

They were a favoured people above all nations. They ought to have received him with delight. His signs and evidence of Messiahship were clear enough. He wrought among them unexampled miracles, and He spake as none other man spake; yet they rejected him, treating their best friend

as though He had been their worst foe. This was a high-handed act of national ingratitude. Special cases occurred in our Lord's life involving an ingratitude still greater. Many eyes did He bless with light; into many deaf ears did He cause sound to enter. Yet the mass of these did not become his disciples, for the number of his male disciples, after He had ascended, was "about one hundred and twenty;" yet

our Saviour had not healed one hundred and twenty merely, but, according to the evangelists, many hundreds. Strange ingratitude, that a man should owe to Christ his eyes, and yet refuse to see in Christ his Saviour! Yet so it was: many were healed, but few believed.

We know, moreover, that our Lord fed thousands of hungry persons. For a time He was very popular with them, as any one will be who has loaves and fishes to distribute. Yet they followed him simply for what they could get from him. Many of these selfish-followers, doubtless, gave their voices against him, and shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

The same treatment was dealt out to our Lord when He acted as the Teacher of the people. He taught them pure truth, and small indeed was his reward. They could not complain of his sermons that they were dull, or that they were devoid of sympathy. We never read that a hearer ever fell asleep under Christ's preaching, as Eutychus did under the lengthy discourse of Paul. At Nazareth, what was his reward? They took him to the brow of the hill, and they would have cast him down headlong had He not escaped. When He taught the Jews in the temple, "they took up stones again to stone him." In return for his salvation, some of them sought to entrap him in his speech, and others gnashed their teeth in rage against him. He brought light into the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

How often must the tender bosom of our Lord have been wrung with anguish over human unkindness! Here and there a grateful woman ministered to him of her substance, and now and then a thankful soul became his disciple; but for the most part there was no response to his love.

The farther our Lord Jesus Christ went on in life, the more did He experimentally know the base ingratitude of mankind. He lived for them; in

obedience to his Father, He spent his whole life for men. His meat and drink it was to do men good. No mother ever loved her babe as Jesus loved his own which were in the world; and yet continually, in every way, men sought to take away his life. One would have thought, when the mob stood in the street of Jerusalem howling out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" that He must have been a common informer, or a poisoner who had secretly tainted the bread of the people, or a blasphemer who had profaned every holy thing. Instead of which, there stood before that furious crowd the meekest among men,—the most self-denying, the most tender man of all of woman born. Base ingratitude of men!

At last that evil generation had its way with the Man of Sorrows, and they took him, after He had been scourged, and led him away to be crucified. The cruel crowd stood around him, and scoffed at his pains; they made jests upon his person; they insulted his faith; they mocked his prayers. See the contrast,—Jesus loves, and man hates. He dies for sinners, and sinners insult him in his agonies. But where were the disciples? Not one of them was there to do him service. "All the disciples forsook him and fled." There was none faithful; no, not one. Ingratitude stained all.

II. WE, ALSO, HAVE BEEN UNGRATEFUL TO OUR LORD.

I would not like to be called untruthful; I should grievously feel it; but to be called ungrateful is equally as degrading. A soldier who had been kindly rescued from shipwreck, and hospitably entertained, was mean enough to endeavour to obtain from Philip of Macedon the house and farm of his generous host. Philip, in just anger, commanded that his forehead should be branded with the words, "The ungrateful guest." That man must have felt like Cain when the mark of God was upon him. Prove a man ungrateful, and you have placed him below the

beasts. The old classic story of Androcles and the lion rises before us. The man healed the lion; and years after, the lion, being let loose upon him, crouched at his feet and acknowledged him as a friend. Ingratitude to friends is vile, to parents it is worse, to the Saviour it is worst of all. Hear, then, and sorrow, for I also mourn as I speak.

I lay the charge first against believers. Every sin of the believer has in it a measure of ingratitude; for since our Saviour has suffered by reason of our sins, we are ungrateful when we wander into sin. Shall that very sin which was the murderer of our Beloved be harboured by us? Away, then, with them all! If a woman saw her husband's murderer before her, and gave her heart to him, what should we think of her? May the Lord by his grace prevent us from being equally shameless.

Could we, any of us, plead innocence if the charge were brought in another way, namely, that we render him but little service, and give him but lukewarm love? How much have we done for Jesus after all? I ought to have said, how little? When I read of some of the saints giving up all that they have, crossing the sea, sacrificing comforts, and living day by day on the verge of death, amid fever and wild beasts, and all that they might honour Christ, I am utterly ashamed. What are we, my brethren? Shall we not hide our heads for shame at our spiritual littleness?

Now I speak of some whose ingratitude to Christ is even greater, if greater can be, for they utterly refuse to trust him. You are told without ceasing that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Notwithstanding all this, up to this moment many of you refuse to trust him; you "stumble at the word, being disobedient." If you deny it, I will ask you, Why, then, have you not accepted him for your Saviour? Why are you

still alienated in your hearts from him? Perhaps your reply is that you do not think of these things. You will not even think of him! Is He nothing to you? Do you despise his blood? You have rejected up to this moment the Christ who died for sinners. Do you know what you have done? Can you, in his presence, continue your rejection? Will you now say to him to his face, "Son of God, bleeding for human sin, we will not trust thee. Son of man, dying in the stead of sinners, we will not yield to thee"? Yet *you have said that, in his presence*,—which is everywhere real, though undiscerned by eye or ear.

Some have not been content with rejecting the Lord, but have made his gospel the theme for jest, and treated his people with indignity. Reviler, what has He ever said to injure you? When has He given you an ill word or look? Ah! it is to his silence that you owe your life. Should He accuse you, you would be undone for ever; yet He has not accused you to the Father, but has pleaded for your reprieve. Sometimes in our police courts you may have seen an inhuman husband brought before the magistrate for having maltreated the poor unhappy woman who is linked to him for life. Watch her closely. The magistrate asks her to give evidence. She weeps and shakes her head, but says not a word. She is asked, "Did he not ill-treat you yesterday?" She is long before she speaks, and then not a word is uttered against the husband whom she still loves, though there is nothing lovable about him. What a stone must that man's heart be, if he does not love her henceforth all her days! But see a nobler counterpart. There is the Lord whom you have injured by your hard speeches and cruel mockeries; when He opens his mouth to speak for sinners, He cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"He came to his own, and his own received him not." Has not the Lord Jesus come to those among

ourselves who appeared to be his own? You, sir, were your mother's own boy, and she, now in glory, was an ardent lover of the Saviour; and when Jesus came to you, He might have said, "This is the son of one of my dearest friends, the son of a woman whose whole heart was mine; surely her son will love me too." Yet you have shut the door upon him. Possibly I address an unconverted person who is not only the son of a Christian father, but of one of God's own ambassadors, yet he himself is an enemy to God. Surely a minister's children should be the Lord's; and yet ministers' sons and daughters have been seen amongst reprobates. Do I address one such? I pray that you may no longer be ungrateful to your father's God.

III. WHAT THEN? WHAT COMES OUT OF ALL THIS?

First, let us appreciate the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must never lower our estimate of the bodily pains of Jesus; but, after all, his mental sufferings were far greater, and amongst the acutest of them must have been this, to be always treated with ingratitude by those whom He loved so well. You know that nothing stings more than unthankfulness, yet your Lord had to feel it day by day. He was evermore occupied in doing everything for men; and men, on the other hand, were doing everything against him.

Next, admire the Saviour's love. The Saviour knew that men would be unkind to him,—He knew it all beforehand,—yet He never turned aside from his course of love; He pressed on still,

through reproaches, and shame, and derision, and every form of human evil, till He had finished the redemption of his people.

Dear brethren, see next the mighty power of the pardoning blood of Jesus. He can take away even this scarlet sin of ingratitude. Though He came to his own, and his own received him not, yet to as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name. (John i. 11, 12.) Have you rejected Jesus fifty years? Come to him even now, and He will blot out your sins in a moment. Come and welcome, come and welcome. May his Spirit draw you now, and you shall find him as ready to receive you as He would have been fifty years ago.

And what will become of those who shall die after having lived a life of constant ingratitude to Christ? There is a limit even to his mercy. Justice takes the place of mercy as soon as the repentant man has closed his dying eyes. "Divine justice is love in flames." When once love turns to jealousy, it is cruel as the grave. You may despise him whose feet were pierced; and reject the Saviour whose heart was opened with the spear, but He will come again. I know not when, but his word is, "Behold, I come quickly." Beware, I pray you, for in that day this shall be the word, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." He will forgive you now; He waits to be gracious to you now. But let the sun of mercy go down, and the blackness of darkness shall abide for ever.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1876.

"TEN MINUTES' WARNING!"

BY THE LATE DR. GUTHRIE.



SOME years ago an awful calamity filled Edinburgh with gloom. We were all surprised and shocked on going to church on Sabbath morning, 24th November 1861, to be told that a house had fallen, between John Knox's house and the North Bridge, on the north side of the High Street, and that a number of people were killed—buried in the ruins. I could not go then, but I went at the close of the service in

the afternoon, and there saw a most frightful spectacle. The whole front wall had fallen, leaving the east and west gables standing, and the north wall. The workmen had already dug out some twelve or fourteen dead bodies. They had begun at two o'clock in the morning, and now it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they were afraid to work longer, —first, because darkness was com-

ing on; and, second, because a storm was rising, and many expected every moment that the enormous pile of building, eighty feet high, would topple over, and bury in death those who were attempting to rescue any who might still be living.

How touching and impressive was the scene before me! It was an awful thing to see, in the fading light of day, and on the walls four, five, six storeys high, the dresses hanging which had been thrown off by the inhabitants before they retired to rest, and the building sunk that carried men, women, and children,—sleeping, waking, sinning, praying, however they were engaged,—down into one grave in an instant of time. I was struck with a staff that was hanging high up on the rent wall, and which its owner had hung there, little thinking that staff was never to be in his hands again! Looking-glasses, where woman had admired her beauty and attired herself, hung here and there on the shattered walls, flickering in the evening twilight. Two dumb clocks, still fixed on the ruins, about sixty feet high, told the hour the catastrophe had happened; they seemed emblems of their owners who lay below, and in whom death had stopped life's pendulum.

Next day, as early as possible, I returned to the scene of the calamity. The three walls were still standing. The clothes of the dead still hung on them; bright tinned vessels were glancing in the light; children's playthings were there; cupboards, with the crockeryware neatly arranged, stood gaping open; kettles sat on cold grates, where the fires continued to burn for hours after the hands that kindled them were cold and stiff in death; and besides these, there were many other indications showing that the people—as shall be at the Lord's coming, and like those before the flood—never dreamed of the calamity, and had made all their arrangements for "to-morrow." Having seen the build-

ing, I was asked to go and see the bodies. I have seen many dead, but of all the sights I ever saw, the most ghastly and most affecting was those twenty corpses in the Police Office. There was one woman whose face bore all the evidence of a slow and very painful death; but the sight, although horrible to behold, was accompanied by this consolation, that the poor sufferer, in her dying moments, may have prayed for the mercy she needed; and He who denied it not to the dying thief may have heard her cry. Another, ere she was swallowed up, had forecast what was to happen. She seemed to have waked from sleep to see that in another moment she would be in eternity. The eyes, the mouth, the whole face, had an expression of unutterable horror; and when that horror was on her, death, instantaneous, fixed the features, forming a ghastly spectacle. It was an affecting and likewise a very instructive sight. It seemed as if the very voice of God was saying, "Be ye also ready!" "Make your calling and election sure!" "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation!"

You think, no doubt, you will rise to-morrow. There are those I now address who have their work planned for another day; they have this place to go to, and that person to see,—they are calculating on the morrow. Nevertheless, I would be false to your souls if I were not to remind you that you may never see to-morrow. Therefore I implore you to seek the Saviour. Seek Him now. Don't wait. Don't wait till to-morrow. Happy those whom death shall find this night upon their knees! who, before they lie down to rest, shall bend in prostrate, earnest prayer to God, seeking mercy at His gracious hand.

Having left the cell of the dead, I went next to that of the living,—of those who had been dug up alive from the ruins. There I saw a poor child that had been taken out of seven feet of rubbish, after lying three hours

below it. She lay on a bed asleep, looking almost like the dead that I had left. On the floor of the cell, well covered with blankets, snug and very comfortable-like, lay two pretty little girls, sharp and intelligent. I asked one of them, "Had you any warning?" "Oh, yes, sir," she replied; "my mother heard a noise like a great crack, and she rose and said the house was falling." "And what happened then?" "Oh, you see, sir, she heard no more of it, and she came to bed beside me." I then asked, "How long did you lie in bed before the roof and the building fell?" She said, "Perhaps, sir, I was ten minutes in my bed when the roof came in and fell upon us, and I went down,—down,—down, till I remembered no more about it." There she was, as it were, one brought up from the grave. By torch-light and gas-light did these rough, kind men dig, through the hours of night, among that rubbish, till they reached this child and her little sister. They found them like two corpses. As you have seen a man shake his watch when it stops, and set it agoing again, they shook these children,—these corpse-like bodies,—the doctor having his finger on the wrist. The pulse begins to beat,—there is life there yet! and there I saw these two little creatures thus, in God's good providence, plucked from the jaws of death.

I saw in the newspapers that others also speak of ten minutes having been given to flee. How much turned on these ten minutes! Some, taking the warning, fled, and are still living,—ten minutes saved them! Some, neglecting it, went to bed, and are dead! Ten minutes may do the same with you! The lives of those in that building turned on the use of ten minutes,—and so may your salvation. Take warning. Flee to the cross; throw your arms around it; cry, "Save me, Lord Jesus, I perish!"—and go to heaven. Neglect the warning,—reject salvation, and you go down to hell.

There was one family, of the name

of Baxter, living on the fourth storey, none of the members of which perished. The head of this house was a butcher. It had been Sabbath morning ere he had got home from his work. His wife and children were gone to bed. She rose and made him some supper, and after that returned to bed; but, just as she was falling asleep, she heard a tremendous crack and rumble as of stones, and from a superstitious feeling cried out, "There's a warning!" He laughed at her fears, but, ere the laughter was ended, from the next room, where a grown-up daughter slept with other three, there came a piercing cry, "Oh! father, father! mother, mother!" He sprang to the door, burst it open; and saw the bed on which his four daughters were lying split in two! The sinking of the room had already begun. Rousing the whole of his family, he hurried them to the door,—wife and nine children. Away ran the children, the wife and her husband, fleeing for their lives. It happened that the stair belonging to the falling tenement communicated with a landing in a house that stood; they made for that. The family reached it and stood there in safety; but ere the father, who brought up the rear, had himself stepped on the landing, the house was bending to its fall. There lay a gulf between him and them—a horrid chasm, that was yawning wider and wider. Summoning up all his energy, he made one bound and cleared it, and by that leap saved his life. He lives. And so soon as he got across, what was the first thing he did? What we shall do in the day of judgment. And what is that? When you and I rise from our graves, if we are God's people, we will begin to count and see if our children are all there—this son, that daughter. Baxter had nine children, and but eight stood there. One was amissing. God forbid that on the great day, and by the right hand of the throne, alas! there should be one of our children missing! If one of you

has an unconverted son or daughter who is going to ruin and to the bad, oh! pray for them now, that, before the chasm grow wider, they may leap, get across it, and be saved. He began, as I have said, to count, and there was one awanting. Had it been left to perish? No, thank God! Jane was found awanting, yet, by God's mercy, saved. The young creature, suddenly awakened out of sleep amid the roar of the falling building, the confusion, the screams, the groans of the perishing, had rushed to the bottom of the stairs, where a benevolent gentleman had found her weeping, and took her to his own home. The lost was found. Next morning she was restored to her parents' happy arms. Ours be the deeper joy of one day saying over every now careless and ungodly child, "This my son, my daughter, that was dead, is alive again,—that was lost, is found!" Pray for that!

How many great and solemn lessons should this sad event teach us! Look at that of the warning! The doors hadn't been working aright for months,—they had warning in this; there were cracks in the roof,—they had warning in this; the floors were sinking,—they had warning in this; the plaster was peeling off,—they had warning in this; the pillars were swaying off the plumb,—they had warning in this. Warnings many, that the house was tumbling, and about to come down. Well, I was just thinking how many warnings men have, and yet they live just as careless and as reckless. The hair turns grey and drops off the head; the teeth fall and

leave empty jaws; the light and power of vision fail from the eyes; man's step and breath grow short; he finds it difficult to climb a hill; he cannot do the work of brain or hand he once did;—all these prognosticate that this frail clay tabernacle is sinking to its fall. "Ah!" you say, as I have heard many do, "well, I wonder how on earth these people did not take warning!" But how on earth, I ask, does many a man not take warning that he is dying, and should make ready for the inevitable hour when he shall go to the bar of judgment and have sentence pronounced on him, not for time, but for eternity? My friends, take the warning. Put it not away. Don't say, "It's all very well for others, but it don't apply to me,—I shall see to-morrow, — next week, — another year, — many other years!" You don't know that; and suppose you did, if you see to-morrow in your present state of sin, I tell you there is far less likelihood of your being saved then than there is now. See these people, dead, buried in an instant among that mass of rubbish, and take timely warning. Delay not a moment. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Live for God, live for Jesus,—live not only for your own salvation, but for others' good,—for dying souls. For our own good, or that of others, there is no time to waste. The Judge is at the door. The voice of Christ, as of old, is sounding loud in the ears of a drowsy world,—“Watch, therefore, lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping!”

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THE JAILOR'S QUESTION ANSWERED.

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Acts xvi. 30.

(Address by Mr. D. L. MOODY, at the Agricultural Hall, London, 19th March 1875.)



(See page 3.)

THAT question which the Philippian jailor asked is just the very question which almost every one asks when awakened to a sense of sin in the sight of God. Men have the idea that they must *do* something, and are always trying to do something, to save themselves. Now, salvation is a gift: how is man going to work for it? In one place Paul says it is "to him that worketh *not*, but believeth." (Rom. iv. 5.) I believe that more people keep themselves out of the kingdom of God by this idea of working than by anything else: they are constantly trying to work for their own salvation—trying to earn it by their efforts. Not long ago I heard a man say he had been

forty-two years learning three things. The first was, that he could not do anything towards his own salvation; the next was, that God did not require him to do anything for it; and the third was, that Christ had done it all himself. Well, these are three things which every man must learn,—that man cannot do it, that God doesn't require him to do it, and that Christ has done it all himself. Salvation is complete; and all that man has to do is to accept of the finished work of Jesus Christ. So that really man has not got to *do* anything to be saved, unless it is to believe or trust. It is an act of the mind and heart, not an act of the body. If I paid even a farthing for salvation, it would cease to be a gift. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the *gift* of God is eternal life." It is a gift; and if a man will take it as a gift, and stop trying to do anything in the way of paying for it, then he can be saved.

Not long ago I was endeavouring to bring out this one truth, when a woman, after the meeting, came down from the gallery, and said, "You have taken away all my comfort and peace to-day; your sermon has made me perfectly wretched." "Why so?" said I. "Why, sir, you told me to stop trying to be a Christian; and I have been trying a good many years, and if I stop trying, what will become of me?" "Well, I think you will be saved then; that is what I think will become of you." "Oh, dear sir, you have taken away all my peace and all my comfort!" "Well, I am glad of it; that is the very thing that is keeping you out of the kingdom of God. Here is a book. Now, suppose I say I give it to you; will you take it, or will you say you will *try* to take it? If you merely say you will *try*, it is plain you do not care to have it." So when people say, "I am going to try and be a Christian," it means that they are not prepared at once to become Christians. I never knew any one to be saved until he left off such trying. It is plain enough

on the face of it. If a gift were offered you, you would not *try* to take it; you would either take it or reject it. Now, Christ is offered to the world; *will you take him, or will you reject him?* And bear in mind, every one is shut up to one of two things. Every person here to-night must either receive the Son of God, or reject him. Every one here must *either be saved or lost*. If you accept Christ, you are saved: if you reject him, you remain lost. Now ask yourselves the question, Am I saved, or am I lost? You cannot be saved and lost at the same time, can you? You certainly cannot be both on the Lord's side and against him. We are told in Scripture to *lay hold on eternal life*. God offers eternal life, and we are told just to lay hold of it. A man may have knowledge; he may give his assent, and say, "Yes, I believe Christ is able to save, and willing to save," but that won't save any one. The thing is to *trust him*,—to *lay hold*. Have you "laid hold," and been saved? or are you refusing to lay hold, and still lost?

O sinner, lay hold on Christ. Let go self—let go all trust in your good resolutions—let go your own righteousness—and just lay hold upon the Lord Jesus now, and he will save you. Some time ago, I read an account of an old miller who used to go down the river at midnight, to relieve another miller who had charge of a mill during the first part of the night. He used to get out a few hundred yards above the dam, and hitch his little canoe or boat and walk down to the mill. His brother miller used to come out and take the boat and row back. One night the old miller fell asleep, and when he awoke he was being drawn right down towards the dam. He knew if he went over the fall it was sure death to him. He seized the oars and pulled against the current, but he found it was too strong. At last he got near the shore, and he seized hold of a twig; then he went to pull himself up, and it began to give way at

the roots. He felt about in the darkness and tried to find another, but the rocks were so steep that he could not climb up, and could find no other twig. All he could do was just to hold on. If he pulled a little harder, the twig would give way, and the current would sweep him over into death. What did he do? Why, he just cried, Help! help! and there he cried for long hours. That is what the Psalmist means in the 40th Psalm: "He heard my cry." The cry of distress was heard. A friend came and let a rope down from the rock (and you know, help must come from above; you cannot get it down here), and he shouted, "Lay hold of the rope!" Well, as long as he kept hold of the twig he could not be saved, but the moment he let go the twig and seized hold of the rope, they pulled him out of the jaws of death.

O sinner, that is your condition. You have got hold of that twig; let it go, and lay hold of the rope. Lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will bring you up out of the horrible pit. When Adam fell, he sank into the pit, and he took the whole human family with him, and he left all his posterity there. The second Adam came after him, and he says, I will bring you up out of the horrible pit; I will establish your goings; I will put a new song in your mouth; I will set your feet on the Rock of Ages. O sinner, to-night lay hold on the Lord Jesus Christ! He is God's gift; and the moment you have him, you cannot perish. Christ is in you the hope of glory.

Some one asked a Christian Indian how he was saved. The Indian took some dry leaves, made a little circle of them, put a worm in the middle, and then set the leaves on fire. The worm went this way and that way; now towards the fire, now back again. At last it went right into the middle and curled itself up to die, as though giving up all hope of saving itself. Then the Indian put his hand in and took it out. That, he said, was how the Lord

Jesus saved him. He had given himself up as lost, and the Lord Jesus came and took him out of the midst of the fire.

A man once said that it took two to convert him. "Two!" said some one; "how is that?" "Well, it took me and the Almighty." "Why, what did you do?" "Why, I fought against God all I could, and He did all the rest." And that is how every one is saved. People fight against God; they fight against his people, they say bitter things against them; they fight against God's way of salvation; and when they have done trying to save themselves, they give themselves up as lost, and then the Great Shepherd reaches down his almighty hand and takes hold of them, saying, "Fear not, I will help thee." Sinner, reach out your hand, and say, "Lord Jesus, lay hold of my hand, and lead me through this dark world." God is ready, God is willing. Your work is to take what God offers. The whole plan of salvation may be expressed in two words,—*giving*, and *receiving*.

God's word says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To see the way that people hang on to their money, it doesn't look as if it were more blessed to give than to receive. But when the Lord says a thing, he means it. He would rather give than receive. So you must put God in his blessed place of giving, while you take your place of receiving. And "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John i. 12.) God will give you eternal life the moment you are ready to receive it. Then, when God gives it, lay hold of it; claim it as yours; take it. God says, "Here is my Son, I give him to you." Well, then, sinner, just say, "I will have him, I will lay hold of him, I will take him, I will receive him to-night."

Young man, don't, I beg of you, take your attention from this great question. Make up your mind this night—this very night—that by the grace of

God you will be saved. He will never be more willing to save you than he is to-night. He offers you salvation now; he brings it to the very door of your heart. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men." Who will have it to-night? Decide like a man, and say, "By the grace of God, I will have it." Take it now. Don't wait till I have got through preaching. Death may have you before this night is over. One who is "mighty to save" is here to-night, waiting to save.

When I was in Newcastle, I went home one night after preaching, very warm and very thirsty. The good lady of the house said, "Mr. Moody, is there anything you want that is not on the table?" "Well," I said, "I should like a glass of water, if it is quite convenient." She got a jug of water from the sideboard, and put it by my side. I took it to pour out a tumbler of water from it, and I saw a fly there. The fly had given up all struggling. It had been trying, perhaps for hours, to get out, and at last it gave itself up to die. I then took a fork, put it down into the water, and the moment I had done so, the fly laid hold of it, and I pulled it out. I put it in my warm hand. It did not recover at first; but at length it became warm, and then it flapped its wings and flew away. I have no doubt, if that fly could have spoken, it would have said, "Thank you, thank you; you have redeemed me, you have saved me."

And so, sinner, Christ comes down to where you are. You are in a pit, and you cannot get out. There is no use in your trying; help must come from

above. He reaches down his hand, and offers to save you. Lay hold of him, and he will save you this night. If you go out of this hall unsaved, there will be no one to blame but yourself; it will be because you would not take the gift as God offers it to you. You can be saved for nothing,—saved by just looking away to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. By the fall and by your sins you are in a terrible pit, and you cannot get out. What is the use of your trying? Why not, then, at once give up *trying*, and *take* him simply by faith?

Now let me ask you to ask yourselves this question, "Would I be saved if I should die to-night? Would my soul be with Jesus in glory, or would my soul be lost?" If you are ever saved, you must come to a decision; if you are ever saved, you must take the first step. Let that step be taken to-night. Do not listen to the tempter; do not listen to your own unbelieving heart; do not listen to those scoffing companions of yours; but to-night—this very night—make sure of salvation, while God is offering it to you. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.)

"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1876.

ISAAC WATTS.



See page 3.

"Study to be quiet, and to do your own business" (1 Thess. iv. 11), has been said to be the lesson taught by the whole career of Isaac Watts, the writer of *Sacred Hymns*. He was blessed in his generation, and has left blessing to others after him, trading with the talent entrusted to him, neither coveting another sphere of labour nor meddling with others.

We like to know about our forefathers, and to talk of them. So

did Isaac Watts. His grandfather was engaged in naval service, and was commander of a man-of-war under the famous Admiral Blake. Many were the adventures he met with. In the East Indies, walking on shore near the jungle, a tiger appeared and prepared to spring on him; he plunged into the river, but the tiger followed, and got up to him. The animal did not desist from pursuit, but he was able by a desperate effort to thrust its head

under water, and keep it there till it was drowned. Under Admiral Blake, he sailed to attack the Dutch; but in the heat of the battle a shot reached the powder magazine, and the vessel blew up, all on board perishing in a moment. His grandmother used to tell him stories like these of former days, and how, at the same time, his grandfather, when at home, showed a relish for music, painting, and poetry, and tried his hand at all those recreations.

His father was at one time a clothier at Southampton, and afterwards kept a boarding-school. He was a Non-conformist, and of course saw it to be his duty to worship and attend the preaching of the word outside the Church of England. He was in consequence cast into prison, the laws against Dissent being enforced at that time very rigorously. This was in 1674; and often did his young wife (a descendant of a French Huguenot), with her little infant Isaac at her breast, sit on the steps of the prison, waiting for admission to her husband. That old jail may be seen to this day at Southampton. It stood on the beach, and the waters at that time rolled up almost to the walls. Tradition asserts that it was just at that spot that old King Canute fixed his chair, when he complied with the suggestion of his courtiers, in order to rebuke their flattery. It was there that Canute taught them that it is in vain the mightiest king tries to assume the prerogatives of God; and it was by the endurance and testimony of such sufferers as filled that prison, that our nation was taught the invincible strength of faith in the truth of God the Saviour. "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther."

When the peaceful days of the Revolution came, Isaac Watts was in London with his parents. Here is his brief record of his early days. He had, as it indicates, a singular aptitude for acquiring languages:—

"I was born July 17th, 1674.

Began to learn of my father, Latin, 1678.

Began to learn Greek, 1683, or before.

Had small-pox, 1683.

Learnt French, 1685.

Learnt Hebrew, 1687 or '8."

But now follows the most important point of all; let the reader note it:

"Fell under considerable convictions of sin, 1688.

Was taught to trust in Christ, I hope, 1689."

This was the turning-point of his life. Can you, reader, tell of the year of *your* new birth? You can in all probability speak of the year when you were born; but can you tell of being "born again?" "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) Would not Nicodemus remember well both the night and the year in which he paid that visit to Christ recorded in gospel history,—when he learned savingly the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul; and how he leads the soul to the Son of man, lifted up like the brazen serpent, "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"? (John iii. 15.)

Isaac Watts, the same year that "he was taught to trust in Christ," records that "he had a great and dangerous sickness;" and in 1692, Sept. 8th, at noon, an earthquake shook all England as well as other countries. But now he was in the ark,—safe in times of personal sickness, safe in the day of public alarm, able to sing Psalm xvi. 1-3, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed."

He carried on his studies diligently and successfully, chiefly at Stoke Newington, in London, and at the age of twenty-four preached his first sermon. Some of his fellow-students became eminent men, but none of them in the same department as himself. What

his peculiar sphere was, soon appeared. He had very early shown a talent for composing verses. When a mere child of eight, he once won his mother's prize of a *farthing*, offered on rainy afternoons to his father's boarders, by the following playful couplet :—

"I write not for a farthing, but to try
How I your farthing writers can outvie!"

But he had very early cherished the desire, if not the design, to write something useful. It is related of Luther, that once hearing from his window a blind beggar sing, tears came into his eyes, and the thought rushed through his soul, "Oh, if I could only make gospel-songs that would spread among the people!" And God gave him his desire. It was thus also with Isaac Watts; and the first of his hymns is said to have been written when at home on a visit to his parents at Southampton, being then a youth of about twenty-five. In the course of the week he wrote the hymn,

"Behold the glories of the Lamb,
Amidst his Father's throne!
Prepare new honours for his name,
And songs before unknown."

And from that day onward he was led to contribute another and another of his sacred songs and hymns that have become universally known.

Like the hymns of our American friend Mr. Sankey in our time, these hymns had a remarkable effect on many congregations. Dr. Doddridge had been preaching in a barn to a country audience on Heb. vi. 12: "Followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." After sermon, heread and sang the hymn which begins with the words,

"Give me the wings of faith, to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.
Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.
I ask them whence their victory came;
They with united breath
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death."

Many of the congregation were in tears, and some were not able to sing, so deeply were they moved. Some peculiar anecdotes might be told in connection with special hymns. On one occasion, an awakened soul, searching for relief, all at once recalled to mind four lines of one of the hymns for children learnt thirteen years before at school, and forgotten till that moment:

"He honoured all his Father's laws,
Which we had disobeyed;
He bore our sins upon the cross,
And our full ransom paid."

And there that soul saw the good news which the awakened long for,—namely, Christ's obedience, by which the law is magnified, and Christ's complete payment of the penalty,—all ready for the sinner's acceptance. There is another interesting story of a chimney-sweep boy heard singing on a cold wintry morning at the chimney top, with lively joy,

"The sorrows of the mind
Be banished from this place:
Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less;"

and how this joy, thus expressed in song, touched the heart of one in the room below.

Isaac Watts was pastor of a congregation for twenty years, but was more useful by his hymns than his preaching, his manner being feeble and his style formal. Thus the Lord divides to every man severally as he will. Nor was there anything remarkable about his deathbed. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, 1748. On the day of his funeral, Dr. Benjamin Grosvenor was met by a friend, who accosted him thus: "Well, you have seen the end of Dr. Watts, and must soon follow him. What think you of death?" "Think of it!" replied Dr. Grosvenor; "why, when death comes, I shall smile on it, if God smile on me."

The inscription placed over his tomb has this verse (Col. iii. 4): "When Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory."

Reader, could this be left by you as a true expression of your faith and hope? Could friends sing, as they laid you in the grave, those lines of Dr. Watts that have been sung over many,—

“Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust,
And give these sacred relics room
Awhile to slumber in the dust.

So Jesus slept! God's dying Son
Passed through the grave and blessed
the bed.

Rest here, dear saint, till from his
throne
The morning break and pierce the
shade.”

It was Dr. Watts who wrote the hymn beginning,

“Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our guilt away,
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.”

It was he, too, who sang as a song for the wilderness journey,—

“My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.

In darkest shades, if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's bright morning star,
And he my rising sun.”

And it was he that anticipated the end of the journey in strains of triumphant expectation:

“The graves of all the saints he blessed,
And softened every bed:
Where should the dying members rest
But with their dying Head?

Thence He arose, ascending high,
And showed our feet the way:
Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly
At the great rising-day.

Then let the last loud trumpet sound,
And bid our kindred rise.
Awake, ye nations underground!
Ye saints, ascend the skies!”

He was not so successful in some of his theological writings as in his sacred songs. Poetry was his gift; and one of his best and latest efforts was the well-known *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*. The cradle hymn, “Hush, my Babe,” the “Busy Bee,” and many others equally simple, have taken hold of the mind and memory in thousands of families since the day when they were written. He used his talents diligently, remembering that the Master says, “Occupy till I come.” He understood and acted on that word in Rom. xiv. 7: “None of us liveth to himself.” No truly Christian man lives for self: he lives for God his Saviour; he lives to pluck brands from the burning. He feels the meaning of those words that were sung by a king of Judah who had been at the gate of eternity, and almost within the veil:

“The grave cannot praise Thee; death
cannot celebrate Thee;
The living, the living, they shall praise
Thee,
As I do this day.”

(Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.)

O fellow-immortal, have you begun this life for God? We are almost at the world to come already.

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THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.



See page 2.

The years are moving on; the days are falling round us like withered leaves; graves are opening and filling; time is getting shorter; eternity hastens on; life is but a vapour. But "the word of the Lord endureth for ever;" and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto us. (1 Pet. i. 25.)

All that belongs to man is changing; only the things of God are unchanging. We live in a dying world; the land of the undying is above.

The babe is born; the infant becomes the boy; the boy passes into the youth; the youth rises into the man; the man takes on the grey hairs of age, and then goes down into the grave. But God liveth. He cannot die. He is "the King eternal and immortal," "from everlasting to everlasting." And his words are, like himself, "immortal:" heaven and earth shall pass away, but they remain. His book changes not, nor loses its youth and

power. His "gospel" is "everlasting," "without variableness or shadow of turning." It is not the gospel of one age, but of all ages; not of one land, but of all lands; not of one race, but of all races,—full, fresh, gracious, healing, as at the first. It was the gospel for our father Adam; for the patriarchs; for Israel; for the apostles. It is the gospel for us also, "on whom the ends of the world have come."

In a time of much sickness and death, an aged saint sat at her fireside with her Bible on her knees, while tidings were coming in to her of one, and another, and another being taken away. Her minister visited her, and sought to cheer her. She turned to him as he was speaking, and said, "They have been telling me that such a one is dead, and such a one, and such a one; but, thank God, nobody can come and tell me that the Lord Jesus Christ is dead." That was her resting-place. In the midst of mortal men she thought upon her immortal Lord, and was comforted. He was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and his gospel was "everlasting."

The sun does not change; such is the *gospel*. The stars do not fade; such is the *gospel*. The sky does not grow dim or narrow; such is the *gospel*. The hills are always the same; such is the *gospel*. Nay, it is more unchanging, more everlasting than mountains or skies, or sun, or stars. Its glory is the glory of God. Its brightness is the brightness of heaven. It lights up souls that, till it shone into them, were as the very night of night, making them luminous and glad as day. It has done this in ages past; it does so still; it will do so to the end. It is the gospel of *light*, carrying light with it, like the sun, wherever it goes. The same light that shone into the souls of Abel, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Luther, and Rutherford, and M'Cheyne, is shining for us, seeking to enter the darkest spirit of the saddest sinner upon earth. It is the gospel of *peace*, contain-

ing in its heavenly vessel the fulness of peace for the most troubled heart.

That peace, flowing from the knowledge of God's free love in Christ, once found its way, as we read, into the recesses of a Roman jail, and made the terrified jailor rejoice amid the earthquake and the darkness. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," was its burden in that blessed night; and it comes to jails or palaces, to huts and halls, with the same glad tidings still. Hungarian history records a story of its triumphs very like that of the jailor of Philippi and of Onesimus at Rome. John Zapolya, a wayward and cruel prince in the sixteenth century, had a favourite horse; the smith in shoeing it had injured its foot. The king threw him into the prison of Buda, declaring in his rage that if the horse did not recover, the man should be put to death. The great preacher of the gospel in Hungary, Devay, a man of singular faith and zeal, arrived at the capital just at that time. To please the enemies of the gospel, the prince threw him into prison. There he found himself side by side with the unhappy smith. Both had reason to fear that in a few days they would be led to execution. Devay was fearless and peaceful, but his fellow-prisoner was sad and alarmed. The Reformer rejoiced to have such an opportunity of "preaching liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." He told the sorrowful man of the free love of God,—of Jesus Christ, and his sufficiency for everything,—of his free pardon,—of the eternal life laid up in him for the sinner,—of the peace which comes from his blood, in the simple belief of the good news which God has sent to man. The poor captive received the glad tidings, and found rest for his soul, to the joy of the zealous Devay. The horse recovered, and the king's order came that the smith should be set free. To the jailor's surprise, he refused to leave. "No," said he, "I will remain; and if my teacher is to die, I will die with

him; his faith is my faith." The king heard of the strange resolution, and, self-willed as he was, took pity on the innocent, and ordered both to be liberated. Such was the power of the everlasting gospel in a Hungarian prison.

It is the same gospel still. The gospel of the sixteenth century is the gospel of the nineteenth. The gospel of last year is the gospel of the year to come. Good news from first to last! Good news and true, from God himself, concerning his own free love in Christ; which whosoever believeth is thereby made glad,—not because of anything done by him, or to be done by him, but solely and simply because of what has been done by the Son of God when he died upon the cross, the just for the unjust.

A dying man once sent for a friend as he lay in dread of what was coming.

"I am dark," he said. And he had good reason for being dark, for he had gone far astray. "I am dark, and I am dying. What am I to do?"

"Jesus died and rose again. That is our message to the sinner."

"But have I nothing to do?" eagerly asked the dying man.

"Nothing. Christ has done it all. The work that saves is done."

The anxious eye was for a minute closed, while he repeated to himself, once and again, "The work that saves is done." Then passage after passage was read to him, as to the *one* link which knits the sinner to the sin-bearing work of the Son of God: "He that *believeth* is not condemned;" "He that *believeth* is justified;" "He that *believeth* hath everlasting life."

"But what am I to believe?"

"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Again his eyes closed, while he repeated, three or four times over, "CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS."

"Yes," his friend added, "Christ came into the world to save sinners. This is a true saying, and worthy of all

acceptation. This is the good news we bring to you."

"I see it," he said, and the peace took possession of his soul. In that peace he died.

The gospel, then, is not a *work*, nor does it bid us *work* for salvation. It tells us of a work done by another for us, ages ago,—a work which has lost none of its value or virtue in the long ages which have elapsed since it was done. It is the work done by one who needed not to do any such work for himself, but who came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves,—the work of bearing sin for the sinner, so that the sinner might go free. For the work must be done by some one. We could not. He alone could. He did it. He did it completely. He did it to the satisfaction of Him who said of it and of him, "I am well pleased." He did it once for all, so that it does not need to be done over again, being complete for ever.

To whom is this everlasting gospel to be preached? To sinners; to the dying sons of Adam, without exception. To what kind of sinners? To no one kind, but to every one to whom that name belongs; for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Are any specially named? Yes; "the chief of sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Any others? Yes; those that are "heavy laden." (Matt. xi. 28.) Any others? Yes; those whose sins are like scarlet and crimson. (Isa. i. 18.) Any others? Yes; those that are "stout-hearted and far from righteousness." (Isa. xli. 12.) Any others? Yes; those who are blind and deaf. (Isa. xlii. 18.) Any others? Yes; those who are "spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." (Isa. lv. 2.) Any others? Yes; those who have "no money," (Isa. lv. 1;) who have "nothing to pay," (Luke vii. 42.) To these the "glad tidings" come. God sends his own message of love to such, and proclaims to them the "exceeding riches of his grace."

To these he makes his most touching appeals, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

It is no long, laborious process to which God calls the sinner in order to be saved. It is just, "Thou wouldst have asked,—and He would have given." (John iv. 10.) It is just, "Believe and be saved." His gospel speaks of something that has been already done by another, and not of anything to be done by us. That which makes the gospel "glad tidings," is that it speaks of a work done once for all, requiring no addition from us, and not needing to be repeated.

It is this everlasting gospel that is life to the sons of men. For the love of God is in it, as in a cup filled with living water; and he who drinks is satisfied.

Without the gospel, joy is impossible to the sinner. The rejection of the gospel is the refusal of the joy. Nor can anything on earth make up for this. The great German poet, on whom the world's honours had fallen so largely, confessed, in his old age, that he did not remember one hour of real joy in his past life. In the recent memoir of Lord Macaulay, we have the following sentence, which speaks of the same deep-seated sadness, at the time when fame had gathered round him to the uttermost: "I am very unhappy. However, I read and write, and continue to forget my sorrow for whole hours. This prolonged parting—this prolonged sipping of the vinegar and gall—is terrible." These two mighty men had everything to make them happy which the world could give,—yet they were sad. The light

of the cross had not fallen upon their path, nor cheered their souls. They were looking elsewhere for joy, and it had not come. One strikingly solemn utterance occurs towards the close of these brilliant memoirs: "Everything I do is coloured by the thought that it is for the *last* time; one day there will come a *last* in good earnest." Is there not in these few words a whole sermon—a New Year's sermon—a message to every reader of these pages—a warning to a heedless world? To each one of us there will come a *LAST* in good earnest; but what is that *last* to be? Is it to be the entrance into light, or gloom?

Threescore years and ten will soon be done,—whether amid riches or poverty, amid honour or dishonour, will matter little in that momentous day when we pass out of time and plant our first footstep on the eternal shore. That crossing—final and irrevocable—of life's deep but narrow river, what is it to be to us? A received gospel is the assurance of the unending gladness; a rejected gospel is the beginning of the undying woe.

"My feet are on the Rock of Ages," was the answer of a dying minister of the last century, to the inquiries of friends as to how he was. Happy he! That rock never moves. He whose feet are planted there is for ever safe. And if any one asks, "How may I plant my feet on the Rock of Ages?" I answer, Receive the Father's record concerning his beloved Son; listen to "the everlasting gospel," and in the reception of that gospel, which lasts for ever, thou shalt live for ever too.

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THE OLD SAILOR; ONE "BORN WHEN HE WAS OLD."



See page 2.

It has been said that few persons are brought late in life to a decision for God. Yet to show that none need despair of mercy (although none should presume upon it), sometimes even the very aged are brought as little children to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to learn of him. The barren tree, that has so long cumbered the ground, brings forth fruit in old age, to the glory and praise of God. (Matt. xi. 29; Luke xiii. 6-9.)

Such a case was that of an old sailor, D. W. He lived in a narrow, confined street in a low neighbourhood in the fishing town of G——. He had served his country faithfully on board a man-of-war, and was never

tired of talking of the time when he served in the ship that carried the first Napoleon to the island of St. Helena.

At the time I first met with him, some eighty years had passed over him; his hair was snowy white, and he was almost blind, requiring to be led by the hand whenever he walked abroad. I felt interested in him, and painfully so when I found that, although it was his pride and pleasure to speak of his having once been brought into contact with Napoleon the Great, he knew little or nothing of a mightier conqueror than he, even the Lord Jesus Christ, whose own "right hand and holy arm hath gotten him the victory." (Ps. xcvi. 1; Col. ii. 15.)

Saddening indeed was the thought that for eighty years D. W. had been living without hope, and "without God in the world." (Eph. ii. 12.) With all the openness and bluntness of a sailor, he avowed his disbelief of the Bible as the word of God. I soon, however, found that his unbelief was not founded on a diligent and fair investigation of the subject. It was just the shallow infidelity, of the heart more than of the head, in some places too common among the working men and the poor, when they meet in workshops and public-houses, and too often fatally corrupt one another. One of those working men once said to me, after a conversation on the evidences of Christianity, "I see there is much more to be said in favour of the Bible being true than I thought. We working men too often hear only *one* side of the question; and it would be well if persons like you were to go among them, and let them hear the *other* side also. There would, I think, be fewer infidels if it could be so."

Continuing my visits to the old sailor, I gained his ear and his confidence. Having obtained the use of a large workshop in the locality, in which to hold Sabbath meetings for expounding the Scriptures, he promised me he would attend if I called

for him. There was not much of heartiness in the promise, and I confess I doubted if it would be kept; but when God works, every hindrance is soon removed. (Zech. iv. 6, 7.)

On the first Sabbath, I called early. It was as well I did so, for I found he had made no preparation whatever to go with me. By putting aside his excuses, however, that it was now too late, and by holding him to his promise, I at length succeeded in taking him with me. It was a season of blessing; and as I spoke of Him who "came to seek and to save the lost," (Luke xix. 10,) and "to give his life a ransom for many," (Matt. xx. 28,) the heart of D. W. was opened, like that of Lydia, "to attend to the things that were spoken." (Acts xvi. 14.) Some rays of the Sun of Righteousness penetrated the hitherto darkened soul, although its clearer light did not shine upon him until some weeks after. Like the blind man who felt the loving touch of a Saviour's hand, he as yet saw indistinctly "*men as trees walking.*" (Mark viii. 24.)

The next Sabbath, although early, I found him at the door, ready and waiting; and when I expressed pleasure at finding him thus, he said, "I was afraid you might forget me." On the Sabbath following, his anxiety to be present was too great to allow of his waiting for me. I found he had given a child a penny to lead him to the place. From this time a marked change was manifested. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," (2 Cor. v. 17,) was fully borne out in the case of this old sailor. He felt it himself. "As I sit," he said, "and think of the many times God has preserved my life in times of danger, when, if I had died, I know my soul would have been lost for ever, I do indeed feel grateful for his preserving mercies. And when I think of my sins, and of my misspent life, I can only go, like the Prodigal, to my heavenly Father and ask him to par-

don my sins and save my soul, for his dear Son's sake." The old man had felt the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, and become the subject of angels' joy. (Eph. ii. 1; Luke xv. 10.)

The change was clearly seen, too, by others. A godly relative, who knew he had attended no place of worship for many years, and to whose remonstrances he had often said, "What use is it for me to go to hear a minister preach? he can tell me nothing but what I already know," now asked him why he attended so regularly. He replied, "I have learned better now, and would not miss going to the house of God for anything. There I was taught what a sinner I am, and what a precious Saviour Jesus is." Led by the Spirit, he was no longer among those who forsake the assembling of themselves together, but united with those who esteem a day spent in God's house as better than a thousand. (Heb. x. 25; Ps. lxxxiv. 10.)

Every true conversion to God is known by its fruits. These were evidenced in the daily life of D. W., as those who lived with him bore witness. One of these said, "Formerly he used to swear sadly, but now an oath never comes out of his mouth. He was, too, very passionate, and a very little thing put him out; but he is quite changed now, and we all see the difference." It is recorded of the Rev. John Newton, that, being asked on one occasion if he thought such an one was a Christian, he replied, "*I never lived at home with him.*" But that test was borne by this aged man, for those who "lived at home with him" bore testimony to the power of divine grace as there seen in his daily life and conversation.

From this time until I left the neighbourhood, some months afterwards, I constantly saw D. W., and witnessed with joy his love to Christ, his obedience to his commandments, and his growth in grace. With childlike confidence he relied on the one sacrifice

for sin offered on Calvary, and with joy looked forward to meet Him in his kingdom who had "redeemed him to God by his blood." (Rev. v. 9.)

It was not my privilege to attend upon him in his last hours on earth; but those who did, speak of him "as holding the beginning of his confidence stedfast unto the end." (Heb. iii. 14.) That end was peace. After a brief illness, he departed to be for ever with the Lord. The voyage of life, through the infinite grace and love of God, ended in his being

"Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet to part no more."

Let this brief narrative encourage the Christian labourer to persevere in efforts to save souls. Despair of none. Those who seem farthest off may soon be brought nigh, and made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (Eph. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 17.) Few cases at the outset can present so much to discourage as did that of the old sailor. Yet grace triumphed over him. And who can limit *His* power to save? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Let us sow, therefore, beside all waters. Christ "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.) Trust the promise, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye *shall* reap if ye faint not." (Gal. vi. 9.) And rest assured, though you may sometimes "go forth weeping, bearing precious seed," ye shall doubtless "come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you." (Ps. cxxvi. 6.)

This narrative may perhaps meet the eyes of the aged. If so, is the grey head in the way of righteousness? Are you trusting, loving, following Christ? Then it is well. Ripening for glory, like Simeon, you shall soon depart in peace, and your eyes shall see the King in his beauty.

"Yet a season, and you know
Happy entrance shall be given,
All your sorrows left below,
And earth exchanged for heaven."

Are you aged, and yet not saved? Sad condition—*yet not hopeless*. The sands of life may have well-nigh run out. Yet there is hope—but *only in Christ*, where the old sailor found joy and peace in believing. Delay not—hasten—flee to Christ. He alone by his blood can blot out the sins of your life. He alone by his Spirit can renew your heart, and sweeten your soul for heaven. Go to him now, **AT ONCE**. Tell him that, if he saved D. W., he can save *you*—even *you*. “Seek and ye *shall* find.” For He hath said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (Luke xi. 9; John vi. 37.)

Perhaps you are young in years. Are you safe in Christ? If so, keep *near* to him. He will be the guide of your youth, the strength of your manhood, the comfort of your old age (if life is prolonged), and your joy for ever. For where He is, there will also his servants be. (John xii. 26; Rev. xxii. 3.)

If you are *not* in Christ, do not let Satan, nor your own heart, persuade you to put off thinking about your soul until a future day,—a more convenient season that may never come. I once stood with a weeping mother beside the coffin of her young daughter, aged fifteen years, and that Christian mother in an agony of sorrow said, “It is not on account of her death I weep so bitterly, but because I have no hope that she was prepared to die. Again and again she used to say, ‘I am young; there is time enough yet, mother, for me to think about religion; but fever came, her reason departed, and after a few days she died.’”

Death *without hope*—how awful it must be! Think, oh! think how much it involves. Presume not upon mercy at a *future* day; but now—in *this* the accepted time, in *this* the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2)—“come to Jesus while you may;” yield your heart to him, and be at rest now, and happy for ever.

“From yon delusive scene,
Where death and ruin smile
Beneath a treacherous mien,
The sinner to beguile,
The Saviour calls, O hear his voice!
And make *his* love your *early* choice.”

“Through life your guard and guide,
In death your strength and stay,
He’ll keep you near his side,
Nor ever turn away;
Your Saviour calls, O hear his voice!
And make *his* love your *lasting* choice.”

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. . . .

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John iii. 3-8, 14-18.)

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DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1877.

A WRONG TURN AT LAST.



See page 4.

I KNEW a respectable young tradesman in my native town (writes a minister in the south of England), who was noted for his skill as a mechanic and his tact as a man of business. He was intelligent, and could talk well. "From a child he had known the holy Scriptures;" and rather prided himself upon his Bible knowledge, and his ability for a Monday's discussion of the minister's Sabbath sermon. His company was sought by his gay young neighbours; and he soon got into the practice of spending several evenings in the week with them, as his fellow-tradesmen, at the public-house. He knew what was right, for he was the son of praying parents, and had been used to a godly example at home, and a decent reverence for the house of God. His tavern visits became a snare to him, and a grief to his comely and gentle young wife, for he was a married man. These visits were at the

same time leading him into habits which were injuring his health, and breaking the order of his business. There is reason to believe that the truth which he heard on the Lord's day now and then deeply touched him; for "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) And who can tell what strivings of the blessed Spirit there were in answer to the prayers of his pious parents? For is it not so that, when we have sometimes wished to "run with sinners to the same excess of riot," we have been held back somehow as by an unseen hand? But that hidden hand was upon us, while God was listening, perhaps, to the voice of some friend who longed for our salvation. Eternity alone will reveal how much we owe to the prayers of those who have cared more for us than we have sometimes cared for ourselves.

The young tradesman had one friend who had deep feeling about his danger. That friend often prayed for him, and sought every quiet opportunity of persuading him to break away from the scenes of temptation, and from the companions by whom he was beset. He showed him that if he would have security against the too evidently growing evil, he must look for grace to cast it off; that he must seek the best and only way of escape from the tempters, by coming to Christ, who, having been tempted, though without sin, and having suffered for our sins, "is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.)

The young man's heart was melted, and he promised to follow his friend's good advice. For a time there seemed hope of him. But that hope by and by became dim. He again fell into the snare; and, as if he would fling off every thought and feeling that might

interfere with his pleasure, he plunged more wildly into the course of evil.

His friend made another attempt. He tenderly besought him to think of the fact that every time he yielded to temptation, he rendered it less easy to resist or overcome; and that by the practice of what he knew to be wrong, he was fixing personal habits of evil, which would by and by, like unbreakable fetters, hold him bound until the sentence of death was fulfilled on him. He pleaded the claims of his wife and his home, and showed how a decided and manly act of separation from his improper connections would result in satisfaction to his own mind, and unspeakable comfort to his best friends. Above all, he urged on him his obligations to Him who said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (John vi. 7; Matt. xi. 28.) Once more he acknowledged his folly, and seemed like the penitent who said, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Ps. cxix. 59.) But alas! once more his "goodness was as a morning cloud, and as the early dew" it passed away. (Hos. vi. 4.)

In faith and patience his friend seized another opportunity, when he found him suffering at home from the effect of indulgence during late hours, and ventured to appeal closely to his conscience and heart. It was now evident that unless the unhappy man took a turn towards a better course, health, and perchance life, must speedily give way. As yet he had not forsaken God's house, nor was his heart as yet free from occasional softenings under the word of truth. His friend earnestly invited him to his only refuge, and solemnly warned him of the danger of continued distance from Christ. In fact, he was haunted by a fear which led him to tell the young man that it appeared as if the apostle's solemn words bore somehow upon his case, "The night is far spent,

the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. xiii. 11-14.) "Your life," said he, "has become a 'night' indeed; and I believe that it is, in your case, 'far spent, the day is at hand.' Eternity is opening before you, and you have no time to lose. Your only safe course is at once to take the apostle's warning and entreaty, and 'cast off the works of darkness.' You know what they are. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' (John iii. 19.) Your conscience tells you, my friend, what these deeds are in your case; but now let me exhort you to cast them off at once and for ever. This must be done by the grace of Christ. Renounce them in *his* strength: your own power will fail. Look for deliverance in *his* name, through *his* blood; and trust in *him* alone for the peace of forgiveness, and for power over sin. And remember, if 'salvation is nearer now' to the Christian than when he first believed, final condemnation may be nearer to you now than ever! How near? Listen, do listen to my advice. Listen to the call of the Spirit. Harken to the invitation of Jesus. 'Come unto me,' he says; 'come now.'"

This appeal had the effect of withdrawing him for a time from his dangerous haunts and "evil communications;" and his more constant attachment to home and to the company of true friends gave joy to those who lovingly watched over him. It was clear that he was making an effort to keep himself free from the allurements of evil company, but it was not yet clear that he was coming

to Christ alone for salvation from guilt, and for that power over sin without which he could not be kept from falling into temptation. He was told that his only certain safety was in the devoting of his heart and life to the Saviour, and that nothing but the love of Christ in his soul could preserve him from the inroads of evil principle and passion. He was reminded, too, that it would help him if he would take a decided stand, and show his religious decision by joining those who professed godliness. His only reply was, that he "would consider it."

His friend met him one morning, and said, "I am going this evening to a meeting for prayer and religious conversation: will you go with me? It will be an introduction for you to those who, I am sure, will give you the advantage of their Christian friendship. Will you go?" After a moment's hesitation, he said, "Yes, I will." "Will you call, then, at seven o'clock," it was asked, "and we will go together?" "Yes, I will join you at seven."

It was seven o'clock, but he had not come. The minutes passed. His friend waited, but in vain. At length, seeing that he was likely to lose the opportunity himself, he went alone. The meeting was over. He returned, but there was no message of excuse or explanation. The night passed. The morning came, and with it the startling news that the lifeless body of the unhappy young man had just been carried into what was now the desolated home of a young widow. Yes; all that was to be seen now of the one who, a few hours ago, had promised to join those "who feared the Lord," was a stiffened corpse. *Where was he?* Oh that he had kept his promise! But alas! when the truth was known, it was found that he had left his home a little before seven o'clock, perhaps with the intention of joining his friend; but in a moment of temptation he took a wrong turn, and went to the public-

house instead of to the meeting for prayer. He had stayed late, and on returning, as was supposed, in the darkness and bewilderment took another wrong turn, fell over the pier, and was gone! Whither? no voice answered! No voice had been heard. The death-scene was in the silent deep. No token was given till "the sea gave up the dead" as the morning broke upon the beach.

Who likes to think of his own life ending thus? Do you? Who intends to finish life in darkness, and to leave a memory clouded with doubtful and hopeless thoughts? Do you? No! Nobody intends it! That young tradesman did not. We all intend to finish well; but are we living well? Are you getting ready for a good finish? Are you casting off the works of darkness, and putting on the armour of light? Oh, my friend, you who read this sad story, are you in any way like that unhappy young man,—knowing the right, but pursuing the wrong? Are you always *intending* to be a Christian,—always resolving to take the right turn at last? What surety have you that it will be so, while you are always neglecting Christ and his "great salvation?" Have you been the subject of many prayers? Have you had good example in early life? Have you had kind advice for good, entreaty, and warning? And have these sometimes softened you, and persuaded you to promise that you would live for Christ? And yet has no promise been fulfilled? Or if none of these early advantages have been yours, have no voices for good reached

you?—no voice of truth?—no voice of conscience?—no "still small voice" of the Spirit?—no voice from Jesus, who died that you might live, and who now lives to plead for you above? And, after all, have you taken no turn for the better? but with vows of being better on your lips, are you still becoming worse? O my friend, how close the end is! Hearken to all who love you! They see what you do not see,—the nearness of your danger! They fear lest you should add another proof that the wise man's words are true, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.) How often have you been reprov'd, advised, persuaded, instructed, and warned! Once more Jesus calls. Sudden destruction may come next! And will you, after all, hear the Saviour say, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproofs: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind." (Prov. i. 24-27.)

Life and death are before you at this moment. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.) Come to him, and follow him in the "way of life," lest another hour see you taking the "wrong turn at last."

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APRIL 1877.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God."—JAMES iv. 7.



"That letter of hers, which you turned into a joke,—you did feel it after all!"—*See page 3.*

"SUBMIT yourselves therefore to God." The Romans were wont to say of their empire, that its way was to spare the vanquished, but to war continually against the proud. This saying aptly sets forth the procedure of the Most High. He aims all his arrows at the lofty, and turns the edge of his sword against the stubborn; but the moment he sees signs of submission, his pity comes to the front, and through the merits of his Son his abounding mercy forgives.

I. TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. "Submit yourselves to God." He is your God, your Father, your Friend: yield yourselves to him. What does this counsel mean? It means, first,

Exercise humility. Brothers and sisters, let us take our right place before God. And what is that? Is it the highest seat in the synagogue? Is it the place of those who thank God that they are not as other men are? I scarcely need reply. If by reason of temporary foolishness you ever boast, I am sure, my dear friends, when you think over it in the watches of the night, you are very much ashamed of yourselves. For the right position of a Christian is to walk with lowly humility before God, and with meekness towards his fellow-Christians. Such humility is not at all inconsistent with believing that we are saved, nor with the fullest assurance of faith,—nay, not at all inconsistent with the nearest familiarity with God. But still our posture should always be that of deep humiliation: we should sit at the Master's feet, and say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." May the Holy Spirit work this gracious submission in every regenerated soul.

This word has a second meaning, namely, *Submission to the divine will.* Beloved friends, be willing to accept whatever God appoints. Are you not some of you very far from this? Are you quite sure that you are submissive to the divine will as to your rank in society? Have you accepted your position in the scale of worldly wealth? Are you satisfied to be sickly, obscure, or of small ability? Are God's appointments your contentments? It is a happy thing when the mind is brought to submit to all the chastisements of God, and to acquiesce in all the trials of his providence. No father can let his boy bend his little fist in defiance, and yet treat that child with the same love and fondness as his other children who submit themselves to him. You cannot enjoy your heavenly Father's smile, my dear brother or sister, till you cease from being in opposition to him.

It means, also, *Obedience.* The position of a Christian should be that

of a soldier to whom the centurion saith, "Go," and he goeth, "Do this," and he doeth it. Let your love be shown by a childlike obedience, which studies to do all the Master's will in all points.

It means, also, submit yourselves to God *by yielding your hearts to the motions of the Divine Spirit*,—by being impressible, sensitive, easily affected. Sometimes the Spirit of God whispers to you, "Retire to pray." At such times, enter your closet at once. The Spirit of God will sometimes impel you to a duty which involves self-denial. Be not disobedient to his call, but go about your work speedily. Let a hint from the Holy Spirit be enough for thee. The handmaid does not require the mistress to speak: it will often happen when she is waiting at table, and there are friends, the mistress will nod, or put her finger up, and that is enough. She does not call out, "Mary, do this or that," or speak to her loudly a dozen times, as the Lord has to do to us, but a look suffices. So it ought to be with us: half a word from the Divine Spirit, the very gentlest motion from him, should be enough guidance.

II. TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT SAVED, but have some desire to be so. You tell me that you have been anxious about your soul. You have been putting forth great efforts,—you have been very diligent in attending the means of grace, in searching the Scriptures, and in private prayer,—but you do not get on. It is very possible, my dear friend, that the reason is this, that you have not submitted yourself to God: you are trying to *do*, when the best thing would be to cease from yourself and drop into the hand of the Saviour, who is able to save you though you cannot save yourself. For a proud heart, the very hardest thing is to submit. Do you find it so?

"How, then, am I to submit?" says one. "*To what shall I submit, and in what respects?*" Well, first, *Submit*

thyself, if thou wouldest be saved, to *the word of God*. Believe it to be true. Believing it to be true, yield thyself to its force. Does it accuse thee? Confess the accusation. Does it condemn thee? Plead guilty. Does it hold out hope to thee? Grasp it. Does it command thee? Obey it. Does it guide thee? Follow it. Does it cheer thee? Believe it. Submit thyself to him who in this blessed page proclaims himself the Saviour of all such as will throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and will rely upon his power to save them.

Yield thyself, next, to thy *conscience*. Thou hast quarrelled with thy conscience, and thy conscience with thee. It persists in speaking, and thou desirest it to be quiet. After dissipation, in the lull which comes after a storm of evil pleasure, a voice is heard saying, "Is this right? Is this safe? Will this last? What will the end of this be? Would it not be better to seek some better and nobler thing than this?" God speaks often to men through the still small voice of conscience. Open thine ear, then, and listen. Thy conscience can do thee no hurt: it may disturb thee, but it is well to be disturbed when peace would lead on to death. He was a fool who killed the watch-dog because it alarmed him when thieves were breaking into his house. If conscience upbraid thee, feel its upbraiding and heed its rebuke. It is thy true friend.

God also sends many messengers. To some of you he has sent the tenderest of monitors. It must have been difficult for some of you in your young days to stand out against a mother's entreaties, when she not only pointed you to heaven, but led the way,—not only spoke of Jesus, but reflected his love in her daily walk and conversation! You have a sister, young man, whom you love and respect: you could hardly tell how much an object of admiration she is to you. Now, that letter of hers, which you turned into a joke,—you did

feel it after all! Yield to its tender entreaties. Remember, God has other messengers, if these loving ones do not suffice.

He has perhaps already sent his messengers in sterner shapes to you. It was but a few days ago that you lost your old friend. Many a merry day you have spent together, and many a jovial night too; he was in as good health as yourself, apparently, but he was struck down, and you have followed him to the tomb. Is there no voice from that new-made grave to you? Perhaps you have been sick, and been made to lie where your only prospect was eternity,—a dread eternity, how surely yours! You trembled to gaze into it, saying to yourself, "Whither shall I fly? My naked spirit, whither must it go when it leaves this house of clay?" It is not my business one-tenth as much as it is yours, but I charge you, hear the voice of these providences! The angel of death has stood at your bedside and said, "Young man, it is the fever this time, and you may recover, but the next time you will never rise from the bed on which you lie!" or, "You have been rescued now from a dreadful accident, but the next time there will be no escape for you. Because I will do this, prepare to meet thy God."

Above all, I pray you submit yourselves, if you are conscious of such things, to *the whispers of God's Holy Spirit*. God's Holy Spirit does not strive with every man alike. Some have so grieved him that he has ceased to strive with them, or does so very occasionally. The worst man that lives has his better moments, the most careless has some serious thoughts; there are lucid intervals in the madness of carnal pleasure. At such times men hear what they call "their better selves." It is hardly so. I prefer to call it the general reprovings of God's Spirit in their souls. He says to them, "Is this right? Is this wise? This trifling, this time-killing, this depraving of the soul by allowing the bodily

appetites to rule,—can this be right? Is there no eternity? Is there no immortality, no God, no judgment to come?" The Holy Spirit sometimes opens the man's eyes, and makes him see the certainty of the judgment day, and the nearness of its approach. Oh, when you are made to feel all this, I pray you submit yourself to it. It costs some men a great deal of trouble to be damned. Many a man who blasphemes, and talks infidelity, merely does so to conceal his inward struggles. Like the boy who whistles as he goes through the churchyard to keep his courage up, they talk blasphemy to divert their mind from its own fears. He who is most fierce in the utterance of his disbelief is not the greatest disbeliever. The man knows better; and I charge him to let that better knowledge come to the front, and lead him to his God and Father. It will be a blessed thing for him if it shall be so even this day. "Submit yourselves therefore to God."

If you ask me again, "*In what respect am I to submit myself?*" I answer, as briefly as I can,—First, submit yourself by confessing your sin. Do not brazen it out and say, "I have not sinned." You will never be pardoned while that is the case. "He that confesseth his sin shall find mercy." Sinner, choose between one of two things: judge yourself, or be judged of God. If you will judge yourself and put in a plea of guilty, then will the Great Judge grant you forgiveness, but not else. Condemn yourself, and you shall not be condemned.

Next, *Honour the law* which condemns you. Do not persevere in pick-

ing holes in it, and saying that it is too severe. The law is holy, and just, and good. Put thy lips down and kiss it, though it condemn thee, and say, "Though it charges me with guilt, and convicts me of deadly sin, yet it is a good law, and ought not to be altered, even to save me."

Next, *Own the justice* of the penalty. Thy sins condemn thee to hell. Do not say, "God is too severe; this is a punishment disproportionate to the offence." Thou wilt never be pardoned if thou thinkest so, but God will be justified in thy condemnation: the pride of thy heart will be a swift witness against thee.

Furthermore, *Submit yourself to God's way of saving you.* Now God's way of saving you is by his grace, not by your merits; by the blood of Jesus, not by your tears and sufferings. He will justify you by your simply trusting Jesus now. Your proud heart does not admire the Lord's way of salvation. You stand up and say, "How is this consistent with morality?" as if you were the guardian of morality,—as if the King of heaven and earth could not take care of the moralities without assistance from you! How dare you dream that the thrice holy God will not take care of that? He bids you trust his Son Jesus. Will you do so or not? If you will not, there is no hope for you. If you will, you are saved the moment that you believe,—saved from the guilt of sin, BY TRUSTING JESUS.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

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BROKEN CISTERNS.



“My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jer. ii. 13.)

Broken cisterns! The world is full of them; and all over the past ages of man's history the fragments of these broken cisterns are strewed. As when one walks over the plains of Palestine he finds ruins of cities everywhere, so when we walk through the world we

find the remains of those things that God calls broken cisterns. All lands are covered with them. All nations are full of them. Wherever you find a son of Adam, beside him you will find a broken cistern; or rather, not one, but many.

In Syria, and many other Eastern lands, where rain falls but seldom, water is stored up like treasure, and prized as men prize a mine of gold. In summer the river-beds are empty,

the wells are dried up, and the rain does not fall. For the laying up of water, cisterns are made; some public, some private. In the road between Jericho and Jerusalem one comes upon the remains of those tanks, hewn out in stone, which once supplied travellers and villagers with water, along these sixteen miles of dry and dreary country. Once full, now empty; once well-hewn and water-tight, now broken and useless, incapable of holding one cupful of the precious rain, they lie there the types of man's disappointed hopes.

There is a Fountain of living water, never becoming impure, never running dry. But men turn away from this, and hew out, each one for himself, a cistern to contain other water. That Fountain continues to pour out its water at their side; the sweet sound is heard of its flowing stream; its clear drops sparkle in the sun: the land is parched: the men are thirsty; yet no one will drink of what has been so abundantly provided. Each is intent on procuring water for himself, at any cost; each one spends his days in hewing out a cistern! He finds it vain labour; yet he toils on in the burning heat. The cistern breaks in his hands and becomes useless; yet he goes on. Instead of betaking himself, in his disappointment, to the Fountain, he sets about hewing another. That also breaks. He tries another cistern. That breaks. He tries another still. And thus all his days are spent in these vain efforts to hew out cisterns; when the one deep, ever-welling Fountain is at hand.

Such is the picture of human wilfulness; of man's determination to seek his happiness anywhere save in God, and in the deep Fountain of his love.

God in his love has spoken to man and pointed out to him the one Well of joy,—HIMSELF, the Living God. "In me," he has said to man, "you have all you need for that empty soul of yours, that aching heart; in me you have everything that can chase away your sorrow and fill you with gladness;

in me you will not be cheated or disappointed; you shall have joy unspeakable, and the peace which passeth all understanding. Come, drink your fill of this one Well of happiness, which is large enough and deep enough to quench the thirst of all earth's thirsty millions." Thus has God spoken, but man has given no heed. He has forsaken the Fountain of living water, and hewn out for himself cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water! He would fain be happy, but *not in God!* He would like his thirst quenched, but not with God! He would like his soul filled, but not with God! Any being, rather than the God that made him! Any sources of pleasure rather than those which are divine! Trifles, vanities, follies, gold and silver,—anything but God!

Every day God is making man to feel the *uselessness* as well as the sin of these departures from himself, these rejections of the heavenly waters, these preferences of the human cistern to the divine Fountain. But all in vain. Man will not believe that there is joy in God, and that all creaturehood is vanity. He drinks each day's bitter cup,—shrinks from its bitterness,—yet returns to it in the hope that what was bitter yesterday will be sweeter to-day. He refuses to learn from past trial or vexation or disappointment. If one cistern breaks, he will hew out another. If one well dries up, he will dig another.

In the things of God he accepts no warning, he heeds no disappointment. On he goes in the same self-chosen path that has so often misled him, saying to himself that though he has been misled to-day, he may not be misled to-morrow. The palace of pleasure which he had builded for himself has crumbled to pieces, but he will rebuild it. He resolves that though he has been deceived hitherto, he will not be deceived again! On he goes,—falling and rising, fearing and hoping,—till life's little day is ending, and then he begins to acknowledge

that all is disappointment: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Time is gone, and the long eternity is unprovided for! Little pleasure here, and no prospect of any for ever!

The histories of our great men afford us sad instances of wasted lives and lost time; of "broken cisterns" and wells without water. We read of an Eastern prince who left behind him a short paper descriptive of a long experience. He had been fifty years surrounded with wealth and honour, tasting every pleasure that earth could furnish; yet he says, "In my long course of apparent happiness, I have reckoned up the days in which I could say that I was really happy, and they amount to *fourteen!*" An English nobleman of the last century, who had lived in pleasure from youth to old age, hewing out his ever-breaking cisterns, thus sorrowfully confesses his disappointment: "I have seen the silly rounds of business and of pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and know their vanity and do not regret their loss. I rate them at their true value, which is in truth very low. Some see only the gay outside, and are dazzled at the glare. I have been behind the scenes; and when I think of what I have seen, what I have heard, what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all this frivolous hurry of pleasure had any reality; and I look upon all that is past as one of those strange dreams which opium occasions, and I do not wish to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the passing dream. I bear this melancholy situation, not with resignation as some boast, but simply because I cannot help it. I bear it because I *must* bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing but killing time the best way I can, now that he has become my enemy. *It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the rest of my journey.*" One of the great statesmen of the last century was visited by a

friend on the morning of New Year's Day, and received the usual kind wishes of the season. "Well," said he in reply, and with some emotion, "I hope this year will be happier than the last, for I scarcely recollect one happy day in the whole of it."

Thus have men drifted on through the years of a heedless life, trying to fill the void of the soul with the world's vanities; and then, when enjoyment ceased, and they stood face to face with eternity, deep gloom filled them. Thousands of "broken cisterns" lay all around them, and the sight was terrible. They had flung away the precious hours which God had given them to prepare for the everlasting kingdom, and they knew not what to do. They could not recall the past; and as they looked into the future all was darkness. They knew not which way to turn. Their lifetime's dream of happiness was gone. Time was run out. Health was gone. Feebleness of body and of mind disabled them from thought or action. Who could help them in such an hour?

Yes, who could help them? Only One. He who helped the thief upon the cross, with all his wasted life of sin. He whom they had forgotten was still at hand to save. The Fountain of living water was not yet dried up. It was still as full as ever. Oh, had they known this! But they died as they lived, with their faces turned away from God.

But no; not all. On some such, God had mercy; and as they lay down to die he drew near in love, and gave them the living water to drink. In the very valley of the shadow of death he caused the water to gush forth for them. With joy they drank of the wells of salvation, and then passed up to drink of the pure river, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

For that Fountain of life is free to the last,—as free to the man of fourscore as to the infant of days. "Ho,

every one that thirsteth," is the message to the death-bed. Though God complains that men have forsaken himself, the Fountain of living water, yet he does not shut up that Fountain. He keeps it open to the very end. "Come to the waters" is still the glad tidings which he sends to the sons of men. All, all may drink. The child, the boy, the youth, the man of grey hairs,—all, all are welcome. That Fountain still sends forth its refreshing stream. Its waters are full of the love of God,—full of the grace of Christ,—full of the heavenly joy;—and there is not one son of Adam who seeks to be happy, yet has missed the way to happiness, that may not freely drink and be satisfied!

At St. Paul's Bay, in Malta, on the slope up from the sea, there is a well. Over that well a small neat building of white stone has been erected, quite on the road-side, so as to be accessible to all. On it there is a Latin inscription from the eighty-sixth Psalm:

"To Thee all nations shall come."

Over the Well of life the same words may be said to be written. Yes, to it all nations shall come: all sons of Adam, weary of their useless toil, weary of their vain pursuit of pleasure, weary of their "broken cisterns!" "Let him that is athirst come."

To complete the picture and the figure, one might suppose another well and another building, or rather the same well and the same erection, with the words "It is finished" on the other side. The Well was dug eighteen hundred years ago, and it

has not run dry. That "finished work" is God's Well for a thirsty world.

No disappointment here! All is lasting. No delusion here! All is real. God's free love comes flowing from the cross, and a thirsty world is invited to drink. In that love is contained all that can fill the soul and make it happy. Let the lover of pleasure and sin and vanity, with all his thirst and weariness, but try this living water, and he will return no more to his broken cisterns.

You who would fain be happy, but know not how or where to obtain what you desire, draw near and drink. You who are sighing over blighted hopes, and withered joys, and dreary prospects, come taste and see that God is good. He will not cheat you with unreality or perishable comfort. He will soothe your aching head; he will bind up your broken heart; he will fill your empty spirit; he will cheer your loneliness; he will give you the everlasting joy and peace. The deep, deep disease within you which is the cause of all your trouble is *sin*. That he will take away. The real burden that presses on you, though perhaps you know it not, is *guilt*. That he will lift off, and make you know the liberty of pardon and the sweetness of forgiving love in Christ Jesus our Lord. For his is the fulness which filleth the empty,—the fulness of joy and health; the fulness of all that satisfaction and rest which you have been seeking so many years in vain. "With joy let us draw water out of the wells of salvation."

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SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT SOCIETY.
DEPOSITARY, JOHN HUME, 5 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1877.

"FOR NOTHING!"

"God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."—JAMES i. 5.



See page 3.

I WAS recently appointed to labour for a short season down by the sea on the coast of Lancashire. A large building was taken for services on the Lord's Day. Accordingly, on the morning of the Sabbath, I presented myself, and was shown by the hall-keeper into a very handsome and spacious hall, where all needful preparations had been made for public worship.

I had brought a boy with me to distribute hymns, and, leaving him without, took my place to wait for the expected audience. The time announced was half-past ten; and at ten o'clock the whole town was notified thereof by the clashing of a great peal of bells. I waited until the time appointed, but no one came. I waited on, with the same result. A few of the theatricals

peeped in upon me, and some of the tavern-waiters, but none entered; and at eleven o'clock I left the place, to meet at the door the mocking condolences of the theatricals and waiters aforesaid. The sea-beach was but a few yards distant, and the long esplanade fronting the sea was literally black with people, walking, lounging, and sitting in the calm sunshine.

As I walked along in utter loneliness, I felt most keenly the Master's wisdom in sending out *two and two*. If I had had only one friend, the feeling of loneliness would never have been experienced; but I was alone. Then I lifted up my heart to the Lord, asking that my utter failure might yet redound to His glory in the attempt I now resolved to make in the open air.

On a spot where the beach shelved gently down I took my stand, with my back to the sea and my face to the crowded esplanade above. I read, as loudly as possible, Isaiah lv., and then engaged in prayer. So prepared to speak for Jesus, I looked fully round for the first time, and there were hundreds of people stopping to hear. I had to abandon the sermon I had prepared, and to cast myself on the Lord for a word in season; and then I commenced as follows:—

"I want you to think of a bitter east wind, a declining day, fast falling snow, and a short muddy street in London, at the far east. Put these thoughts together, and add to them the picture of a tall stout man, in a rough greatcoat, and with a large comforter round his neck, buffeting through the wind and storm. The darkness is coming rapidly, as a man with a basket on his head turns the corner of the street, and there are two of us on opposite sides. He cries loudly as he goes, 'Herrings! three a penny! red herrings, good and cheap, at three a penny!' So crying he passes along the street, crosses at its end, and comes to where I am standing at the corner. Here he

pauses, evidently wishing to fraternize with somebody, as a relief from the dull time and disappointed hopes of trade. I presume I appear a suitable object, as he comes close to me and commences conversation.

"'Governor,' (the rough coat and comforter look anything but professionally ministerial,) 'what do you think of these 'ere herrings?'

"As he speaks, I note that he has three in his hand, while the remaining stock are deftly balanced in the basket on his head.

"'Don't you think they're good?' and he offers me the opportunity of testing them by scent, which I courteously but firmly decline; 'and don't you think they're cheap as well?'

"I assert my decided opinion that they are good and cheap.

"'Then, look you, governor, why can't I sell 'em? yer have I walked a mile and a half along this dismal place, offering these good and cheap 'uns, and nobody don't buy none!'

"'I do not at all wonder at that,' I answer.

"'Tell us why not, governor; tell us why not.'

"'The people have no work at all to do, and they are starving: there are plenty of houses round here that have not had a penny in them for many a day,' was my convincing but unsatisfactory reply.

"'Ah! then, governor,' he rejoined, 'I've put my foot in it this time; I knew they was werry poor, but I thought three a penny 'ud tempt 'em. But if they haven't the ha'pence, they can't spend 'em, sure enough; so there's nothing for it but to carry 'em back, and try and sell 'em elsewhere. I thought by selling cheap arter buying cheap, I could do them good, and earn a trifle for myself. But I'm donethis time.'

"'How much will you take for the lot?' I inquired.

"First a keen look at me—then down came the basket from his head—then a rapid calculation—then a grinning inquiry—

“‘Do you mean profit an’ all, governor?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘Then I’ll take four shillin’, and be glad to get em.’

“I put my hand in my pocket, produced that amount, and transferred it to him.

“‘Right, governor! thank’ee! What’ll I do with ’em?’ he said, as he quickly transferred the coins to his own pocket.

“‘Go round this corner into the middle of the road, shout with all your might, *Herrings for nothing!* and give three to every man, woman, and child that comes to you, till the basket is emptied.’

“On hearing these instructions, he immediately reproduced the money, and carefully examined it piece by piece. Being satisfied of its genuineness, he again replaced it, and then looked very keenly and questioning at me.

“‘Well,’ I said, ‘is it all right and good?’

“‘Yes,’ said he.

“‘Then the herrings are mine, and I can do as I like with them; but if you don’t like to do as I tell you, give me my money back.’

“‘All right, governor! an’ they *are* yours; so if you says it, here goes!’

“Accordingly he proceeded into the middle of the adjoining street, and went along shouting aloud, ‘Herrings for nothing! real good red herrings for nothing!’

“Out of sight myself, I stood at the corner to watch his progress; and speedily he neared the house where a tall woman I knew stood at the first-floor window, looking out upon him.

“‘Here you are, missus!’ he bawled; ‘herrings for nothing! a fine chance for yer! come and take ’em!’

“The woman shook her head unbelievably, and left the window.

“‘Vot a fool!’ said he; ‘but they won’t be all so. Herrings for nothing!’ A little child came out to look at him, and he called to her, ‘Yer, my dear; take these in to your mother, tell her how cheap they are—herrings for

nothing!’ But the child was afraid of him and them, and ran indoors. So down the street, in the snowy slush and mud, went the cheap fish, the vendor crying loudly as he went, ‘Herrings for nothing!’ and then added savagely, ‘Oh, you fools!’ Thus he reached the end; and then, turning, continued his double cry, ‘Herrings for nothing!’ and then in a lower but very audible key, ‘Oh, you fools!’

“‘Well?’ I said to him calmly, as he reached me at the corner.

“‘Well!’ he repeated, ‘if yer think so! When you gave me the money for herrings as yer didn’t want, I thought you was training for a lunatic ’sylum! Now I thinks all the people round here are fit company for yer. But what’ll I do with the herrings if yer don’t want ’em and they won’t have ’em?’

“‘We’ll try again together,’ I replied. ‘I will come with you this time, and we’ll both shout.’

“Into the road we both went; and he shouted once more and for the last time, ‘Herrings for nothing!’

“Then I called out loudly also, ‘Will any one have some herrings for tea?’

“They heard the voice, and they knew it well; and they came out at once, in twos and threes and sixes, men and women and children, all striving to reach the welcome food. As fast as I could take them from the basket, I handed three to each eager applicant, until all was speedily disposed of. When the basket was empty, the hungry crowd who had none was far greater than those that had been supplied; but they were too late—there were no more ‘herrings for nothing!’

“Foremost among the disappointed was a tall woman of a bitter tongue, who began vehemently, ‘Why haven’t I got any? ain’t I as good as they? ain’t my children as hungry as theirs? Why haven’t I got any?’

“Before I had time to reply, the vendor stretched out his arm toward her, saying, ‘Why, governor, that’s the very woman as I offered ’em to

first, and she turned up her nose at 'em.'

"'I didn't,' she rejoined passionately; 'I didn't believe you meant it!'

"'Yer goes without for yer unbelief!' he replied. 'Good night, and thank 'ee, governor!'"

As I told the story upon the sea beach, the crowd gathered and increased, and looked at each other; first smiled, then laughed outright.

It was my time then; and I said, "You cannot help laughing at the quaint story, which is strictly true. But are you sure you would not have done as they did—been as unbelieving as they? Nay! are you sure you are not ten thousand times worse than they? Their unbelief only cost them a hungry stomach a little longer; but what may your unbelief cost you?—God—not man—God has sent *His* messengers to you repeatedly for many years, to offer pardon *for nothing!* peace *for nothing!* salvation *for nothing!* He has sent to your houses, your homes, your hearts, the most loving and tender offers that even an Almighty God could frame; and what have you replied? Have you taken the trouble to reply at all? Have you not turned away in utter scornful unbelief, like the woman? or ran away in fear, like the little child? Many have heard a voice they believed, and they have received the gift of God; but you are still without a hope on earth, or a hope in heaven, because you will not believe God's messengers when they offer you, by His commandment, all that you need for time and eternity—*for nothing!*"

"Take warning by that disappointed crowd of hungry applicants. When

they were convinced the offer was in good faith, and would gladly have shared with their fellows, they were *too late!* They were thoroughly convinced, they were quite willing then to participate, but their faith and knowledge came only in time to increase their hunger and misery!

"Let it not be so with you! Do not you be in that awfully large crowd of disappointed ones, who will be obliged to believe when belief will not help them; whose knowledge, when it comes, as surely it will come, will only increase eternal sorrow that they put off believing until it was *too late!*"

As I looked earnestly upon that vast crowd upon the sea-shore, the laughter was utterly gone, and an air of uneasy conviction was plainly traceable upon many faces.

"Will you not come to God by Jesus now?" I entreated. He is waiting, watching for, pleading with you! There is salvation, full, free, and eternal; uttermost, complete redemption; forgiveness, help, guidance, and blessing—*all for nothing!*—'without money and without price.' Friends, the food was paid for, though afterward freely given. So your salvation is paid for, (by a price which only He who paid it knows;) and I am come from the great city to urge you to take, and be safe and happy for ever!"

Though we had no place to retire to, it was good to walk up and down on the beach, showing the way of God more perfectly to some who were attracted and impressed by this commencement of a sermon by the sea.

Rev. C. J. Whitmore.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1877.

HENRY WIGHT.



"DOTH not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths; she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." (Prov. viii. 1-4.) In Old Testament days, the Herald of Salvation (Christ himself) was thus represented, proclaiming the way of life to men everywhere—not in the temple only, not only in special assemblies, but wherever there

were souls to listen, in street, or lane, or dwelling. And fired by such example, messengers of the Cross have ever been found at home and abroad preaching to their fellow-men in this manner. HENRY WIGHT, of whom we are about to tell, abounded in this work. For many years, no one was better known in the streets of Edinburgh than he, gathering in souls from among the most neglected and uncared for.

Born at Dumfries in 1801, he was educated in Edinburgh. His talents and inclination led him to study for the bar; and there is little doubt he would have made some figure in the "Parliament House" had he continued there. But when he was converted and led to Christ, it might truly have been said of him, and more literally than of many, that as to prospects, money, and friends, "he forsook all, and followed him." His love for worldly distinction at first abated, and then died away, and he devoted all his energies to the ministry of the gospel, especially in its direct bearing on the conversion of souls. So did he long for this, that when one and another through his instrumentality came under the power of the truth, he would be found saying, "But I want a great outpouring of the Spirit—*hundreds* instead of *ones*. God is able to do this." And so did the Lord bless him in his service, that when he died, many in almost every part of Scotland, and all over the north of England, blessed his memory as that of their spiritual father. For all he had forsaken, it might be truly said that he had received "an hundred-fold." (Matt. xix. 29.)

We cannot say that his conversion was brought about by any sudden event or remarkable means. Being a thoughtful man, he read religious books; and in reading, among others, a work of Ebenezer Erskine on the "Assurance of Faith," he was awakened to see that as yet he had no faith at all deserving the name. This led him to search the Scriptures, and to deal with God

about his salvation; nor was it long before the Holy Spirit led him into the harbour of rest, through the atoning work of Christ.

As an elder in the church to which he at that time belonged, he most diligently attended to those under his care, and then began to gather together the careless ones whom he met in his district, earnestly and lovingly setting Christ before them. Many were awakened at these meetings. But soon after, when hindrances were thrown in the way of his preaching to these souls, he resolved to give himself to this work entirely, unconnected with any denomination. For this end he hired a room; that room became a little chapel, and from that beginning the congregation advanced, till they were able to take possession of what was then well known as Richmond Court Chapel, in connection with the Congregationalist Union.

But open-air meetings were his chief field of labour, during the long period of nineteen years. His person was tall and commanding, his countenance open, frank, honest; there was a look of kindness about him at all times, and his voice was full and clear. The people stopped to listen to him, and week after week souls were arrested. He had nothing of excitement in his manner, but great downright earnestness. He set forth the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the sinner's substitute, trusting for results to the power of the Holy Ghost.

On one occasion, John G., a man in middle life, who had heard him and dreaded him, picked up on a Sabbath morning a fragment of a religious tract, in which he found the words, "*I have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" He felt strangely, and said to himself, "I am determined to be one of those people." He soon made his way to Mr. Wight's chapel. Various things deepened his impressions; but when the minister invited any present who wished, to stay behind and converse with him, his heart

failed. Another night he resolved to go, and again drew back. On the third night, Mr. Wight announced that he did not mean to repeat his invitation. "Now," thought John, "I am done for; I have lost my chance!" More anxious than ever, he resolved to go uninvited, but several times passed the door, feeling as if some one said, "Don't go." At length he went in, opened up his mind, and was ere long found at the feet of Jesus.

Another time Mr. Wight spoke to a man who evidently wished to avoid personal dealing, and had therefore asked something about the doctrine of election. Mr. W. said to him, "*The word for you and me is, Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*" This word sank into the man's mind, and one evening at the death-bed of one of his children it returned with such power, that he retired to speak with the Lord on his knees, and was enabled then to look and live.

Mr. Wight's habit was well known of missing no fit opportunity of speaking to people personally about their souls. Some friends in a country town were once talking about this, when one of them, a tall, powerful man, outwardly respectable, but as to religion a mere formalist, fiercely doubled his fist, and said that if Mr. Wight were to attempt the like of that with him he would knock him down. Not long after, Mr. Wight visited that town. The very man referred to, who was zealous in the temperance cause, was deputed to request him to give an address on that subject. When about to leave, Mr. Wight, who had cordially consented, quietly said to him, "My friend, temperance is very important, but there is something of still greater importance, and that is *salvation*. Have you ever received Christ as your Saviour?" The question was put so kindly, and with such unaffected simplicity, that the man's recent brave threat about "knocking down" was all forgotten. Instead of

taking the question as an insult, he at once became gentle and thoughtful, and ready to hear more. The result, as received from his own lips, was that he became an earnest inquirer after salvation, ere long a true believer, and till old age a consistent and useful Christian.

Mr. Wight was a man of great common sense. Reckoning the habit of late rising to be one that ought to be resisted, he did not merely mourn over it, but made it a matter of constant prayer and watchfulness. He wrote to a friend, "The Bible says, Be children in malice, but in understanding be men. Christians ought to be the men of quickest understanding and soundest judgment, because God teaches us by enlightening our understanding. Christianity will never take away common sense from us, though common sense will not make a Christian." In regard to some who make prayer take the place of effort, he said, "If we were always eating, the body would be destroyed; so would the soul be if we were always praying. Exercise is good for the body, and so the soul finds benefit from exercising itself in some duty, reading, visiting, writing. The food received in prayer becomes nourishment when exercise is taken, not otherwise. This is the reason why so many people fall into delusion who seem to be much in prayer. It is one of the devil's tricks to tell people to '*wait upon the Lord*,' when all the time they are resisting him by not *doing his bidding*, which is the true meaning of '*waiting*.'"

In the same spirit of sanctified common sense, he taught his people to *give* to the cause of Christ. He saw that in the Scriptures contributing to the support of the gospel at home and abroad is reckoned a real privilege, and so he told a church meeting, "I would not like to be the minister of a people who grudged this."

He was a happy, cheerful, contented man. He wrote to his wife on one

occasion : "How well these two words are paired in the Bible, and run together like carriage-horses,—*'unthankful, unholy.'*" (2 Tim. iii. 2.) Another time he wrote, "I have been reading the life of Washington, and have learned much from it how I should carry on my work among the churches. Nothing touches me so much as his patience and want of self-seeking, when compared with those who acted with him. Instead of losing his temper and throwing up his commission, as many men would have done, he went on calmly making always the best of what he had."

But his health gave way. In 1856, one morning he spat a little blood, "and" (says he) "no one who never experienced it can know what a damp such an event throws over the spirit." He soon was compelled to cease from his beloved work of preaching. He continued, however, to do work as he was able, till April 1861, when he was ordered by his medical advisers to try the German mineral waters. On 27th June, he went to bed rather better than usual, but about four in the morning was found unconscious. He had quietly passed away. He is buried in the cemetery of the Reformed Church at Homburg.

His example quickened many, apart from his words. There was no death-bed scene in his case, not even a death-bed utterance. His life was his testimony; to him "to live was Christ." As John Newton said, "There is a more important question than, How did this man die? and that question is, *How did he live?*"

Reader, when you are dying, it may

be you will seem calm and resigned, and neighbours may say when you are gone, "He is at rest." But unless you have got rest from the alarm of guilt by coming to the blood of Christ, and rest from the old nature by the Spirit within you giving daily victory, the epitaph on your tomb must be, "*Good for this man if he had never been born.*" Better never born, than not to be born twice. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

Is yours a life for God, like that of Henry Wight? Be not deceived; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. One of the old Puritans says, "By the thread, you may find the clue; and by a man's daily life you may find out where he is to be at last." An unconverted man must be a lost man, for he is a man out of Christ; and the divine rule of salvation is, "No Christ, no heaven." What madness to follow Satan to the place of torment, when you might follow Christ to the land of rest! What folly to sit at ease, when the next moment you may be in hell! You cannot show one promise in all the Bible that holds out a ray of hope to the sinner who does not obey the gospel-call.

O reader! never speak of peace until you have known the power of Christ's blood to take away sin. Peace, if solid and true, is founded on pardon, and pardon comes from the work of Christ. It was there HENRY WIGHT found rest, and a joy which so filled his soul that he could not let a day pass without making some effort to bring others to enjoy the same.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1878.

A CALM IN THE STORM.



See page 3.

In one of our mining districts, there is a little market-town which has a fine old church, with a tower remarkable for its beauty. Many years ago the western end of the church, and the lower part of the tower, were partly shut in from view by a curious-looking building which served as the town market-house. The upper storey, where poultry and butter were sold, was reached by a rude flight of stone steps built against

the side wall which faced a narrow street. Those steps strangely leaned outwards at the top, leaving a rather wide gap between them and the wall. Nobody, it seemed, had thought it worth while to rebuild the steps, or to fill up the gap, and so, there it remained, a memorial of what had caused it.

A traveller once stood looking up at the tower, and wondering at the odd taste of the townsfolk who had built

so ugly a pile against so beautiful a form. A friend who had lived in the town called his attention to the leaning flight of steps, and said that he remembered when they were struck off from the wall; that it was the work of a moment, and done by a flash of lightning, during a storm that he would never forget. He then went on to give the stranger the following narrative:—

“The clock was striking twelve at night as the first flash startled me, and the first thunder peal made our old windows rattle as if every bit of glass was let loose from the frame. We, too, were all of a shake. But the storm went worse and worse, until that awful burst which did the mischief to the tower and the old market steps. At that time there was a lady living yonder;” and he pointed to a house opposite the market. “She was an orphan, as yet unmarried. She was worldly, given to fashionable gaiety; though she had not been without religious instruction and example. Nor had her heart as yet lost all the impressions left on it by the piety which had lived and acted before her in the home of her youth. These impressions, indeed, now and then, would become fresh again as she listened to truth which her parents had so loved preached in the old church, whose shadow was always upon her dwelling. A mere glance at that tower from her sitting-room was enough, at times, to call up thoughts which had been put into her mind in infancy, and to awaken feelings which made her conscience uneasy.

“On the night of the storm she had been at a ball; and had given herself up with more than usual freedom to the vain enjoyments which the opportunity afforded. While she was indulging her fondness for gaiety, the tempest was gathering outside; and the floods of rain were pouring down the narrow street as she left the scene of pleasure to reach her home. She was in the act of stepping into the house, when the lightning flashed around her, instantly followed by a crashing thunder peal. Flashes and peals followed with

awful quickness. It seemed as if all the storm forces of nature were let loose. To the conscience of the poor trembling lady it was as if a summons were come to appear before the throne ‘out of which proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices.’ (Rev. iv. 5.) Surely, she thought, ‘the end of all things is at hand.’ (1 Pet. iv. 7.) ‘The judge standeth before the door.’ (Jas. v. 9.) What shall I do? If ‘the great day of his wrath is come,’ how shall I be ‘able to stand?’ (Rev. vi. 17.) And now, it was as if all her past sins were rising to bear witness against her. Her neglect, her delay, her prayerlessness, her broken Sabbaths, her slighted Bible, her heedlessness to good advice and gracious example; yes, her ingratitude to the Saviour, her long resistance of the Spirit’s drawings, her wilful rejection of her heavenly Father’s love, all seemed to take living form, and to utter voices of condemnation. Her memory appeared to be quickened, and words which had been long buried came forth with more terror than even that of the lightnings, though they seemed to penetrate her very soul. One utterance, especially, was like the voice of doom: ‘If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?’ (Heb. ii. 2, 3.) ‘He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!’ (Heb. x. 28–31.)

“She called her servants around her, that their company might serve, if possible, to lessen the fears which

crowded upon her; but the lightnings and thunderings seemed to grow more and more terrible, until she fled to her room, and threw herself upon her bed. Scarcely, however, had she hid herself, before an awful peal made her spring from her hiding-place and rush towards the door. She had not been off the bed a moment, when the lightning struck one of the pinnacles of the church tower, and hurled the ponderous mass of granite down through the roof of her bedroom, crushing the bed from which she had just risen into atoms. Had she been on it an instant longer, she would have perished. She was in the doorway of the room, and escaped the falling timbers only by the space of a few inches. She turned and saw the ruin from which she was so strangely snatched, fell on her knees, and burst into tears. Up to this time, she had been full of alarm: the fear of judgment, and the seeming nearness of eternal woe, kept her nearer to despair than to penitence; but the sight of mercy, so graciously revealed in her deliverance from death, had broken her heart; and now, bitterly weeping, she cried, 'Lord, show me what I am to do; have mercy, and pardon me, and I will be thine from this hour for ever.'

"God was dealing with her as he had dealt with the jailor at Philippi. (Acts xvi. 23-36.) The stout-hearted man had hardened himself against Paul and Silas, and the gospel which they preached; and was asleep, while they were singing and praying in the dungeon into which he had 'thrust them.' But when the prison was shaken by the earthquake, which came as one answer to their prayers, the hard man was full of terror, and would have destroyed himself in his fright; fear had mastered him. But the voice of Paul was the voice of mercy, 'Do thyself no harm.' No harm is intended to thee, but good! It was the voice of Jesus. That voice of mercy melted the stony heart; and the sinner 'came trembling,' with a 'broken spirit;' and, humbling himself to the dust, cried,

'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' That same hour saw him a believer in Jesus, a pardoned sinner, a soul renewed. The earthquake had awakened his conscience; but the appeal of mercy, speaking to him in his deliverance from death, softened him into submission to him whose providence and saving grace had so worked together for his good.

"Like the jailor, the lady whose eyes were now opened to see how her Saviour had ruled the storm, and made it serve his gracious purpose towards her, did not pray and vow in vain. The tumult which the outer tempest had called up in her soul was hushed by the same voice as stilled the fury of that night's lightning and thunder. The storm ceased. The morning dawned. And when the calm sunrise showed the effect of the tempest upon the tower, and the old market-house steps, and her shattered dwelling, she was 'a new creature;' she had been 'turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; having received forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus.' (Acts xxvi. 18.) What a change had taken place between midnight and dawn! She had passed from 'death unto life' (1 John iii. 14); and, like the jailor, she proved the reality of the change by thenceforward cheerfully living to 'do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.'" (Gal. vi. 10.)

This true story, told under the old tower, is full of lessons for us all. It tells how the providence and the Spirit of God work together in leading souls to Christ; and how they work together so closely that the soul who heeds the warnings, instructions, and appeals of the one, is brought to enjoy the saving grace of the other.

Is there one whose conscience has never heard the voice of providence? Has it never startled you by its note of danger, or by telling you that "the Lord is at hand," to save, or to judge and

condemn? Has no storm ever brought you face to face with death, even eternal death? Has no unlooked for crash of trials in one hour darkened your life, both past and future? Has affliction hurried you to the brink of the pit? Has no rush of misfortune borne away all that was pleasant to your heart, leaving you desolate, in prospect of greater desolation? and have you never seen the mercy that has allowed you to feel your nearness to destruction, and then has snatched you back, that, softened by his mercy, you might cry, I will "return unto the Lord. He hath torn, and he will heal; he hath smitten, and he will bind up"? (Hos. vi. 1.) If the Lord see fit to set "his terrors in array against you," it is to convince you of your weakness, and to show you that your peril is so great as to constrain him, in mercy, to give a token that you may not perish.

And shall all his tokens be in vain? Let your heart yield, to accept the peace which he offers you, perhaps, for the last time! Do you say, "I have no terrors upon me—no storms disturb my soul"? Is it so, then, that up to this hour your God has been dealing gently with you, persuading you by daily comforts, easy circumstances, happy surroundings? And why not let his gentler way prevail? "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. ii. 4.)

O reader! let his goodness lead you to Jesus! Wait for no tempest

to drive you to him! Let him be your Saviour now, before another nightfall! Let the next day-spring find you his! Then, no storm that may ever come shall break your peace!

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopp'd my wild career:
I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fix'd his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

"Sure, never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seem'd to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.
My conscience felt and own'd the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail him there.

"Alas! I knew not what I did!
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain!
A second look he gave, which said,
'I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live.'

"Thus, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.
With pleasing grief and mournful joy
My spirit now is fill'd,
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by him I kill'd."

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1878.

PHILIP SHARKEY, THE KILMARNOCK BLACKSMITH.



PHILIP SHARKEY was a blacksmith at Kilmarnock. He had been brought up a Roman Catholic, but had long abandoned the creed of his early days. He had become infidel in his opinions, and profligate in his habits. Moreover, with a vigorous and undisciplined mind, and warm affections, Philip was one of those who are naturally fitted for being ringleaders in their little circles. His influence in this way was accordingly

very great. To use his own words, he had been "for three and fifty years the deevil's honest servant." One of his old comrades once said to me, "Ah! I see through you; you want to *convert* me. But try your hand on Sharkey; he's a merry one, and you won't go without your answer from Phil."

Our intercourse, which continued for two or three years, was barely tolerated

on his part. He would gladly have dropped it; but poor Philip's kindness of heart did not permit him to be rude, and he never took any step more decided than quietly to slip the bar into the door when he saw me coming. *My* one object, never lost sight of, was in the gentlest way to awaken his conscience, while at the same time I kept ever before him Jesus as God's gift to him, and as available for him *now*, and *here*, just as he was. His one object was to keep these subjects far away, and to waste time in unprofitable talk; or, worse still, to pick out little holes, as he thought, in the Scripture story. But though he struggled hard to resist the truth, it was as the sword of the Spirit, "quick and powerful."

"Man," said he one day, "you make me miserable. You don't speak to ither folk that way, do you?"

The eye of God had been following this poor wanderer, and the set time was now come. *God himself did it all.* It was something to hear the story from his own lips, while the tears trickled down his blackened cheeks; but it is comparatively nothing to read it here on paper, without the feeling, and without the tears. I will try, however, to give it as nearly as possible in his own way.

"Who was speaking to you, Philip?" I asked him one morning in his little workshop, where I had found him, with open mouth and enlarged heart, praising his Saviour.

"There was naebody speakin' to me at this time; but I'll tell you't a'. On Tuesday morning, after my breakfast, I took my Bible, and read a wee bittie o' the third o' John. Weel, as I was reading, there was an awfu' thocht took a haud o' me; it stanged me jist like a bee, an' put me that I couldna read ony mair."

"What was that thought, Philip?"

"Weel, it began wi' this. I saw that Nicodemus was a guid man, a saint beside me, and yet even *he* couldna be saved unless he was born again; and my conscience said to me,

'What'll come o' a dyvour (a worthless fellow) like you?' I kenned I had tried to be guid, and though I hadna managed it yet, I expected to manage it some time; but to be *born again*, born *owre* again, I had ne'er tried that. I had ne'er thocht o' that ava' (at all), an' didna understan' how it was to be dune; and yet, unless I was born *owre* again, I couldna see the kingdom o' God. I was dumfounded, an' hae nae mind whether I let the book fa' or flung it frae me; but I got rid o't, and gaed out, to shake aff the fear and trouble that it had brocht on me. 'But *it wadna shake aff.* 'Hoots!' said I, 'it's a' nonsense.' But something in my heart said, '*It's no nonsense*, but it's a' true.' I gaed into the smiddy, and began to work, and tried to forget it; but no, it grew waur and waur, till I couldna bear't. I never was in such a state in my life. If ever onybody had a taste o' hell, it was me on Tuesday, staunin' wi' the hammer in my haun' before the studdy (anvil) there, and the sweat breaking on me in perfect horror. There was hell opening its very mouth afore me, an' there was I just steppin' into 't; an' a' that I had been doin' for three and fifty years was only heapin' up sin on my ain head. 'Oh,' said I, 'if I never, never had been born!' It was awfu'! I couldna bear't; so I creepit doon on my knees in the corner, *owre* among the coals there, (it's a braw while since I was on my knees before,) and cried out for mercy.

"Weel, I believe I got it. When I was on my knees, saying I dinna ken what, a strange licht filled my mind; I saw things clearer than ever I did afore,—na', things I never saw afore. I had aye kent I was bad enough, and had aye ettled (intended) to be better some time; and though I had never managed it yet, I blamed mysel' for no being earnest enough, and thocht that the next time I tried, I wad pit out a' my pith (strength), and mak' a richt reform. But I never saw till I was on my knees there, that *it was a' far past*

that already; that, even though I could mak' mysel' better, I wadna be a bit nearer the mark, for I was *lost already*, and a' my strivings, reform or no reform, couldna alter that. But alang wi' this I saw anither thing,—that salvation also was a' settled for me by the Lord Jesus; that he himsel' had ta'en the sin, and suffered for the sin, and that naething was left for me to dae but just thankfully to tak' him at his offer. Oh, man, how my heart grippet at it! and I rose filled wi' wonner that the Lord Jesus wad hae onything to dae wi' a creatur like me. It's wonnerfu'; but it is the blood of Christ that cleanses from *all sin*. If I was in hell afore, I hae been in heaven ever since. I never was happy till noo, an' I believe that I hae never stoppet praying nicht nor day sin' syne. I prayed a' nicht yestreen in my dreams."

It was with the deepest emotion that Philip told this, and with wonder at the grace that could stoop so very low as to reach him. "But," said he, "ye'll no tell onybody?"

"What! Philip, are you ashamed of the Lord Jesus?"

He was slightly hurt at this, and said, "No, I was nane ashamed o' Satan when I served him, to my ain sorrow; and do you think I'll be ashamed o' my Saviour? No, no; but to tell you the truth, I'm no just sure that it will staun'. Wait a wee, an' see. I hae mony a time tried to be guid, but it aye wore aff in a day or twa; an' oh, if this should wear awa' too! But I hope no, for I ne'er felt onything like this; but still I'm a puir weak creatur, an' if I canna dae the cause ony guid, I wadna like to dae't ony ill." I encouraged Philip to trust in God for his keeping, and after prayer we parted.

But he could not keep the secret himsel'. God's candle in him shone out through the cracks in the bushel with which he would have covered it, and refused to be hid. That very day he was at the prayer meeting; and as soon as his old companions visited him, they found him a new man

in word and spirit. God's word was in his heart like a burning fire shut up in his bones; so it burned its way out in spite of his plans, and, like the Prophet Jeremiah, he *could not stay* (Jer. xx. 9). He was regularly at the daily meeting. One day he said, "Hoo comes it that folk pray sae different frae what they used to do? Lang syne a prayer used to be the dullest thing I ever heard, but noo it's a perfect treat." "Ah, Philip," the reply was, "the difference is less in the prayer than in yourself."

He was a most eager student of God's word. His two great subjects of regret were that he had wasted his life in sin, and that he had never till now seen the glories of God's word. Of his past life he said, "It seems to me that I hae been a' my days like a man castin' his coat to grip butterflies."

A few days after the great change, he told me of a little struggle he had had on a point of conscience. In his work, an opportunity had occurred by which he could have made a few shillings, in some way justifiable on the practices of his trade, but certainly not so by God's word. It had been a little struggle; but, in answer to prayer, he had got direction as to what he ought to do, and also strength to do it. "But," said he, "if it had been a fortnicht since, it wadna hae cost me a thocht; but noo I hae naething to dae but please the Lord Jesus in everything."

Six weeks after his conversion he caught cold, and his illness, four months after that, issued in death. All this time he delighted in God's word. The Psalms were exquisitely sweet to him. The Gospel of Luke was as much so. As for the Epistle to the Romans, he could not get through it. Verse by verse he hung over its golden treasures; and, unwilling to lose any of them, instead of pushing forward, he turned back again and again to the beginning.

"Have you got through Romans yet?" I said to him one day, having before left him about the twelfth chapter. "No," said he, "I'm fear't I'll no get

through't here; I hae begun't owre again."

His favourite text was 1 John i. 7: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Not long before he died, his wife said, "But, Philip, are you no fear't to dee? I declare I'm fear't when I think o't."

He replied, "No, Peggy, woman, what wad I be fear't for frae a man that dee'd for me?"

"But, Philip," said I, "have you never any trouble at all when you think about your sins?"

"No," said he, "I canna say I have: the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from *all* sin. Ye see the view I tak' o't is this: *God says* it, and I *just believe* it. There are some men so true that I would actually lippen (trust) my soul to their words. Indeed they might be mista'en, and so I wadna like to stake my soul on their judgment, but I could at least lippen my soul to their truth. No, no, they wadna kennin'ly deceive a puir creatur to his eternal ruin. Weel, then, is the Lord Jesus waur than them? Ye ken *he* canna be mista'en; and is his word no to be trusted as weel at least as the best o' men's?" Here was the rock on which Philip built his house—*Christ's blood*, and *God's word*.

His disease progressed, but his confidence never faltered. It was all based on free, full grace, through the precious blood of Christ. One evening, a neighbour of his, who was ailing in body and also exercised about his soul, said to him, "Yes, Philip, I believe God is willing to forgive me; but you see I'm bound to be terribly scourged, I have been such a sinner."

Philip's reply was, "No, no, man, that won't do. Nane o' ye a', ye ken, hae a richt to speak about sin an' scourgin' like me. But my comfort is that the Lord Jesus took a' my sins, an' was scourged himsel' for them eighteen hunner years since. It's *his* scourgin' gets them forgi'en to me. As for this illness o' mine, I look on't as God's dealin' wi' me in love for my ain guid."

Philip's end drew nigh: it was perfect peace. Psalm xxxii. 6, and 1 John i. 7, became more and more precious to him.

The last time I saw him he was sorely distressed in body, but calm in soul. With great effort he gasped out, word by word, slowly and painfully, "When—ever—I breathe—my last here—I just—drap—drap—into—Christ's—arms." He clearly wished to say more, but could not. He took my hand, gave it a gentle squeeze, smiled with a happy smile, and glanced upwards. We met no more.

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And is not the gospel of the grace of God still, as in the apostles' days, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?

Careless reader! this man was perhaps no worse than you. If his sins so distressed him, why is it that *your* sins do not distress *you*?

Troubled and anxious reader! this man was no better than you. Will you not, then, be encouraged, by the welcome he received, to go at once to the same Saviour? Listen to that Saviour's loving words: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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THE FIRST STEP TO THE RIGHT.



See page 3.

"I WISH I could be like you, Mac; you never seem to be out of temper. Everything that comes, and all you have to do, you take so easily; and you always have a cheerful face for a fellow. You used not to be so in old times, before you joined the army. Soldiering appears to have made another man of you."

"No, Will; if you see any change in me, it was not soldiering that did it."

"What was it, then?"

This was the beginning of a chat between two old friends, who had met again after some years of separation; one of them, who had once enlisted as a soldier, having returned to his native place, being discharged after long foreign service.

"That which made me another man, Will, is that which is as free for you as for me,—that which cures all evil

tempers, and would make duty your delight, and give you a cheerful face by always cheering your heart."

"I wish you would tell me more about yourself, Mac. I used to think when you and I went about together, years ago, that I was not so bad as you in some things. I was bad enough, but you know I used to tell you that you were too bad; and now, when I look at you, I say to myself, 'What would I give to be as good as Mac?'"

"You must not talk of my goodness, Will. But I'll tell you a bit about myself. I was, as you say, too bad once; and when I left home as a soldier I was very bad, and should have been so still, and worse; for you know we are always on our march one way or the other, deeper into the evil every day, or farther towards the good. I was on a rapid march for death and hell. But no commander ever had a voice like *his* whose word one day went through my soul. 'Halt!' said he, and halt I did; for it seemed to me that hell was all at once close upon me. But he who said 'halt' gave the word, 'Right about face!' and I was right about. 'Quick march!' was the word, and every step of my march since that has brought me nearer to the good land, the Canaan of rest and peace."

"I can't understand this," said Will, "I know I am going the wrong way; but how to get right, that's the question. It's no use wishing, it appears to me, and nothing comes to me like what you talk about."

"Why, I am sure you were brought up to know your Catechism, Will?"

"Yes; but what of that?"

"Why, one question was, if you remember, 'What is repentance unto life?' and the answer you and I were taught to give was that it is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God (2 Tim. ii. 25; Acts xi. 18), whereby, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also

of the filthiness and hatefulness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ, he so grieves for and hates his sins as that he turns from them all to God (Ezek. xviii. 28, 30, 32; Luke xv. 17, 18; Ezek. xxxvi. 31; 2 Cor. vii. 11; Acts xxvi. 18), purposing and endeavouring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience (Ps. cxix. 6, 59, 128). Now, this was what my heart was brought to know, Will; this was my 'right about face,' the first great turn in my life. I was brought to see and feel what this true repentance means; and if you would be made 'another man,' the change in you must begin with this."

"Now, Mac," said Will, "that is what I don't understand. They say that all this is of such necessity that none may expect pardon without it; that is, as I take it, it is my duty to repent, and if my duty is not done, I must take the penalty. But if repentance means all you have said, all this sight and sense of sin, and danger, and God's mercy, all this grief and hatred of sin, and all these good and fixed purposes; if all this is my duty, and my duty now, why, the fact is, I have not all these thoughts and feelings and resolutions, and I can't at this moment command them. In what a case am I!"

"Stay, Will, it isn't that you are to command at this moment all the feelings that you would like to have, or put yourself just in that posture of readiness for a new life that you desire to be in; but that you use the grace which is now given, do that now to which the Spirit prompts you, and take the first step, in order that you may take another, and another. We can't complain of not being able to reach this or that spot if we never begin to use our feet. 'I thought on my ways,' said the Psalmist, 'and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' (Ps. cxix. 59.) How can we feel the truth about ourselves, or have any

deep feelings after God, if we never think? 'All my lifetime,' said a man to me once, 'have I been trying to keep myself from thinking, that I might have the pleasure of sin without interruption; for I knew that if I went into serious thought for five minutes, I should be constrained to yield to divine convictions.'"

"Well, but I have had thought, Mac, and do think, and am convinced that all is wrong with me; and yet I am hard, and don't get a whit nearer to what I want; indeed, I rather fall farther away from it."

"But have you prayed?"

"Prayed! Of what use is it? I seem to have no power."

"Then ask for power. If you are sincere in your desire and purpose to be a Christian, God will be inquired of. 'Ask, and it shall be given you,'—all the feelings, all the resolution, all the fruits of true repentance; 'for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.' (Matt. vii. 7.)

"But let me tell you my story. One evening during that time when, as I said, I was, as it were, on a forced march toward death, I got into a brawl with some bad companions, and disgraced myself. Covered and filled with shame, I got away from the cursed place, and crept into a church; there I crouched in a corner, and listened. A minister was praying, and, 'Oh!' said I to myself, 'oh that I could pray!' But my heart was hard, and I was too proud to bend my knees. At last I fell down, though my heart was still hard, and, as you said, it seemed of no use, I had no power. I said at length, 'Lord, help me! Lord, teach me to pray!' and then and there my heart was softened. I could do nothing but weep. Ah! those tears were prayers. I felt that I was a sinner; and yet it seemed to me that there was such mercy in the Saviour, and mercy for me, that I could have

wept my soul away. I was ashamed of my sinfulness; yet my heart was fixed. I vowed that if God would take me, I would be his for ever.

"I left that church with new plans and purposes. All the day long I was in sorrow, and yet in hope that God would accept me. Many a night, while my comrades were sleeping around me, have I watered my hard bed with tears; there was a kind of joy in weeping. But with all this I could not see how my sorrow was to be turned into lasting joy. I met with an old sailor one day, however, and he offered me a tract. I took it, and the thought struck me that he might be able to show me the way to comfort. I told him how I was; and he laughed for joy to hear me talk of my sorrow. And, says he, 'Jesus is waiting to save you; and all he asks is that you trust in him alone as your Saviour.'

"I could not understand about faith in Christ. 'It seems hard,' said I, 'though you seem to think it easy, to believe in Jesus.' 'Well now, look here,' said he; 'you put me in mind of the captain of a little coaster in which I once had a run up the Bristol Channel. We were nearing Great Orme's Head, just off the Conway, and the skipper gave me his glass, and said, "That tower-like thing on the hill yonder was a Roman lighthouse, they say. There's not much of it left, but those are the holes in the wall, they tell me, for the ends of the bar on which six lights used to be hung. They were hung so that the ship which wanted to get into the river channel for Conway had to watch until the six lights, which at first were seen as six, lessened in number, apparently as the vessel neared the proper channel; and when the six lights were in a line, so that they seemed as one, the vessel was in her right course for Conway; and as long as the lights were seen as one, and only so long, was she kept right towards her

anchorage. The man at the helm had to keep a fixed eye and a steady hand, or he would be on the mud this side or that." "Well, now," said I, "that old lighthouse has a fine lesson for you and me still, I think. A penitent sinner wants to find his way into the port of peace. 'How shall I get in?' says he. How? Why, see that light, steer for it till you see it clearly as *one* light. It is Jesus. Look at him as your *one* Lord, your *one* Sacrifice for sin, your *one* able and willing Saviour, your *only* one, your *own*. Look at him *alone*. Keep your eye fixed, and move towards him. Look calmly. Look steadily. Don't look about you. Don't keep looking at yourself. You are sure to be in the way while you see him as your *one* Saviour. Think of nothing else but Jesus, and, like the souls who once 'looked unto him and were lightened,' the light of his smile will give your trusting soul to see and feel itself at its desired anchorage, safe in the port of peace." What I said to the captain, I say to you, my dear fellow: your way is clear; Jesus is your Saviour now. The old sailor's lesson was enough for me. I looked unto Jesus, trusted in *Him*, and was at peace.

"Now, that's the story, Will, of my turn 'from darkness to light;' that's how I come to be another man, as you say, from what I was when you knew me first. And what I found, you may find, if you will only yield as I did to the blessed Spirit, who is now working in you, and showing you the way to him who is saying to your heart, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' (Matt. xi. 28.) Won't you come, Will?"

"Yes, Mac; my hardness has been giving way even while I have been listening to your story. The Spirit seems to be teaching me to pray, and by his help I will ask till I receive, I will seek till I find, I will knock till Jesus opens to me. Your Commander shall be mine, Mac; and at his word I will march with you to the land of promise."

Will was as good as his word. He became "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3), and he and Mac were long, known as happy companions in the way to heaven.

You and I, reader, will find the same way open to us. This is the only right way, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) Have you taken this way, or are you still "standing in the way of sinners?" Do not say you cannot turn. If you are not in the right way, it is because you "will not come" to him who came down and conquered death and hell that you might escape, by being saved from sin, and made a "follower of that which is good." Until you come to him, every step you take in life is in the wrong direction, and brings you nearer to the point beyond which you can never turn towards good, or find your way out of bondage to evil. The longer you delay repentance, the more difficult it will be, and the less easy to come to Christ. You will never have a better time than now. Stay and think. Ask God to help you. Be decided; and, with firm purpose to follow as your Saviour's Spirit leads, take **THE FIRST STEP TO THE RIGHT.**

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1879.

"WHERE ART THOU?"

AN ADDRESS BY D. L. MOODY.



Six thousand years have passed away since God spake these words to Adam in the garden of Eden after he fell,—WHERE ART THOU? (Gen. iii. 9.) That text has come to us down the ages, and I doubt whether there has been any one of Adam's sons who has not heard it at some period or other of his life—sometimes in the midnight hour stealing over him—"Who am I? Where am I? Where am I going? and what is going to be the end of this?" It is well for a man to pause and ask himself that question. I would have you ask it, little boy; and you, little girl; and you, old man with locks turning grey and eyes growing dim. I do

not ask you where you are in the sight of your neighbours—of your friends—of the community in which you live. It is of very little account what men think of us; but it is of vast importance what GOD thinks of us; it is of vast importance to know where men are in the sight of God; and that is the question now. So ask yourselves this question. Do not think I am preaching to your neighbours, but remember I am trying to speak to *you*,—to every one of you as if you were alone.

“WHERE ART THOU?”—Let me speak a word to three classes: the professed Christians, the backsliders, and the ungodly.

First, I would like to ask the professing Christian this question, or rather let God ask it—Where art thou? What is my position in the church, and among my circle of acquaintance? Do my friends know me to be, out and out, on the Lord's side? You may have been a professing Christian for twenty years, perhaps thirty, perhaps forty years. Well, *where are you, to-night?* Are you making progress towards heaven? And can you give a reason for the hope that is within you? Suppose I were to ask those who are really Christians here to rise, would you be ashamed to stand up? Suppose I should ask every professed child of God here, “If you should be cut down by the hand of death, have you *good reason* to believe you would be saved?” Would you be willing to stand up before God and man, and say that you have good reason to believe you have passed from death unto life? Or would you be ashamed? Run your mind back over the past years: would it be consistent for *you* to say, “I am a Christian;” and would your life correspond with your profession? It is not what we say, so much as how we live. Actions speak louder than words. Do your shopmates know that you are a

Christian? Do your family know? Do they know you to be out and out on the Lord's side? Let every professed Christian ask, Where am I in the sight of God? Am I standing up for Jesus as I should in this dark world? If a man is for God, let him come out and be on God's side; and if he is for the world, let him be in the world. This serving God and the world at the same time—this trying to be on both sides at the same time—is just the great hindrance to Christianity. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me.” (Luke ix. 23.)

Now, secondly, let me talk a little to those who have gone back to the world—to the backslider. It may be you came to some great city a few years ago a professed Christian. You were a member of a church once, and perhaps a teacher in the Sabbath school; but when you came among strangers you thought you would just wait a little—perhaps take a class by and by. So you gave up teaching in the Sunday school; you gave up all work for Christ. Then in your new church you did not receive the attention or the warm welcome that you expected, and you got into the habit of staying away. You have gone so far now that you are found in the theatre, perhaps, and the companion of blasphemers and drunkards. Perhaps I am speaking now to some one who has been away from his Father's house for many years. Come now, backslider, tell me, are you happy? Have you had one happy hour since you left Christ? Does the world satisfy you, or those husks that you have got in the far country? Oh, backslider, come home to-night! I have a loving message from your Father. I care not how far you have wandered away; the great Shepherd will receive you back into the fold to-night. Did you ever hear of a backslider coming home, and

God not willing to receive him? I have heard of earthly fathers and mothers not being willing to receive back their sons; but can any man say he ever knew a really honest backslider want to get home, but God was willing to take him in? The devil has been telling you lies about God; you think He will not receive you back. Be assured that He will welcome you *this minute*, if you will come. Say, "I will arise and go to my Father." May God incline you to take this step.

Now let me speak to the third class. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Sinner, what is to become of you? How shall you escape? "*Where art thou?*" Is it true that you are living without God and without hope in the world? Did you ever stop to think what would become of your soul if you should be taken away by a sudden stroke of illness—where you would stand in eternity? If you are not saved, what excuse will you have to give? You cannot say that it is God's fault. He is anxious, waiting to save you. I want to tell you to-night that you can be saved if you will. If you really want to pass from death to life, if you want to become an heir of eternal life, if you want to become a child of God, make up your mind this night that you will seek the kingdom of God. I tell you, upon the authority of this Word, that no man ever sought Christ with a heart to find him who did not find him. I never knew a man make up his mind to have the question settled, but it was settled soon.

This last year there has been a solemn feeling stealing over me. I am what they call in the prime of life. A man at my age has, as it were, reached the top of a hill, and just begins to go down the other side. I am speaking to many now who are also on the top of the hill,

and I ask you, if you are not Christians, just to pause a few minutes, and ask yourselves where you are. Let us look back on the hill that we have been climbing. What do you see? Yonder is the cradle. It is not far away. How short life is! It all seems but as yesterday. Look along up the hill, and yonder is a tombstone; it marks the resting-place of a loved mother. When that mother died, did you not promise God that you would serve him? And did you not take her hand in the stillness of the dying hour, and say, "Yes, mother, I will meet you in heaven"? And have you kept that promise? Are you trying to keep it? Ten years have rolled away—fifteen years—but are you any nearer God? No, your heart is getting harder; the night is getting darker; by and by death will be throwing its shadows round you. My friend, Where art thou? Look again. A little farther up the hill there is another tombstone. It marks the resting-place of a little child. It may have been a lovely little girl—perhaps her name was Mary; or it may have been a boy—Charley; and when that child was taken from you, did you not promise God, and did you not promise the child, that you would meet him in heaven? Is the promise kept? Think! Are you still fighting against God? Sermons that would have moved you five years ago—do they touch you now?

Once more, look now *down* the hill. Yonder is a grave; whose grave is it? It is your own. You cannot tell how many days, or weeks, or years it is away; you are hastening towards that grave. Even should you live the life allotted to man, many of you are near the end, you are getting very feeble, and your locks are turning grey. It may be the coffin is already made that this body shall be laid in. My friend, is it not the height of madness to put off salvation so long?

During the next week death will surely come and snatch some away ; it may be the speaker, or it may be some one who is listening. Why put off the question another day? Why say to the Lord Jesus again to-night, "Go thy way for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee"? Why not let him come in now? Did not you promise ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years ago that you would serve God? Some of you said you would do it when you got married, and settled down ; some of you said you would serve him when you were your own master. Have you attended to it?

There are three steps to the lost world. Let me give you their names. The first is *neglect*. All a man has to do is to neglect salvation, and that will take him to the lost world. Some people say, "What have I done?" Why, if you merely neglect salvation, you will be lost. I am on a swift river, and lying in the bottom of my little boat. Down yonder, ten miles below, is the great cataract. Every one that goes over it perishes. I need not row the boat down ; I have only to pull in the oars, and fold my arms, and *neglect*. So all that a man has to do is to fold his arms in the current of life, and he will drift onwards and be lost.

The second step is, *refusal*. If I met you at the door and pressed this question on you, you would say, "Not to-night, Mr. Moor'y, not to-night ;" and if I repeated, "I want you to press into the kingdom of God," perhaps you would politely refuse : "I will not become a Christian to-night,

thank you ; I know I ought, but I won't to-night."

Then the last step is, to *despise*. Some of you have already got on the lower round of the ladder. You despise Christ. You hate Christ, you hate Christianity ; you hate the best people on earth and the best friends you have got ; and if I were to offer you the Bible, you would tear it up and put your foot upon it. O despisers ! you will soon be in another world. Make haste, and repent, and turn to God.

Now, on which step are you, my friend?—*neglecting*, or *refusing*, or *despising*? Bear in mind that a great many are taken off from the first step : they die in neglect. And a great many are taken away refusing. And a great many are on the last step, despising salvation. A few years ago they *neglected*, then they got to *refuse*, and now they *despise* Christianity and Christ. They hate the sound of the church bell ; they hate the Bible and the Christian. But one more step, and they are gone.

O ye despisers, I set before you life and death ; which will you choose? When Pilate had Christ on his hands, he said, "What shall I do with him?" and the multitude cried out, "Away with him! crucify him!" Young men, is that your language to-night? Do you say, "Away with this gospel! Away with Christianity! Away with your prayers, your sermons, your gospel sounds! I do not want Christ"? Or will you be wise and say, "Lord Jesus, I want Thee, I need Thee, I will have Thee"? Oh, may God bring you to that decision!

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1879.

PARIS AND THE M'ALL MISSION.



MR. M'ALL, formerly a Congregational minister in England, has for some six years past devoted himself to Paris. He is a man of faith and prayer, combining with great earnestness a singular meekness and unselfishness,—just the man for such a work.

Happening to be in Paris soon after the war of 1870, he went into a "café"

shortly before leaving. He was distributing tracts at the door, while Mrs. M'All remained inside. A workman grasped his hand, and said, "Will you not come and tell us the true religion?" These words were enough. They clung to Mr. M'All as he journeyed home; and as he pondered them he could not help recognising in them a message from God to come over and

help those poor Parisians. He broke his home ties, and, with his zealous and indefatigable partner, took up his abode in "Belleville," in the very midst of these strange Communists whom everybody dreaded. He was warned against Communistic violence; he was told that his life was not safe. But he had, in the strength of God, resolved to face the great work, and he had counted the cost. So he took up his abode in that poor district, among those men and women whose hands were yet red with blood, and smelling of the petroleum with which they had set the Tuileries on fire. He took a room for a hall, sent out his invitations, and soon gathered round him a goodly number of those outcasts, eager to listen to his words, and to the hymns he sang to them.

But soon there came openings in other parts of Paris. Calls, unmistakably from God, were gladly responded to year after year, till the one station has now grown into twenty-two, scattered like forts, or rather like beacons, all over the city. Some of the rooms or halls will seat about 200, others 400, and one 550; if crowded, as they sometimes are, considerably more. In all, there is accommodation for 4652. The average weekly attendance of men and women is about 8000, and of young people about 3000. Most of the meetings are twice a week, others oftener; one, that of Rivoli, every night. The audiences are mostly of the poorest class, but there is a singular mixture of both rich and poor in all of them.

One of the largest stations is in the Boulevard Ornano. Mr. M'All was warned against that district as the nest of infidelity and crime. But if it was Satan's stronghold, it had only the more need of the gospel. He took a hall, issued his invitations, and began on the night appointed. A large number came, but came to scoff, and oppose, and disturb; but next evening he took with him the

devoted and accomplished Theodore Monod. A discussion ensued, the atheists were silenced, and since that time this Ornano station has been the largest and most remarkable of all. The hall holds nearly 600, and it is generally full.

The work goes hopefully on. What is the attraction? What is it that thus draws together, night after night, week after week, such multitudes of those working people of Paris, of whom it used to be thought that nothing could interest them but some sensational harangue, or some new theatrical entertainment? What,—but just

"The old, old story
Of Jesus and his love"?

They were wont to think that no one cared for or would go near them, unless it were either to find fault or to get some advantage out of them. To them it was a new thing to be told that while the Bible and their own consciences convicted them of sin, yet "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) And it was a new thing to be told that this love of God, believed and received into the heart, could destroy the love of sin within them, and make them "new creatures." The following brief notes, among many more which might have been given, show that even in dark, restless Paris, the gospel of Christ is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Romans i. 16.)

"An aged mother and her son," writes one of the visitors, "have caused us much joy. They have attended our meetings for a year and a half, and testify to the life and blessedness they have found in Christ. The son thus expresses himself: 'See what he has done for me. To know that I have a perfect Saviour! Now I fear nothing, because God protects me. I know that he loves me,—that suffices me. I sought long to know

the truth, now I have found it. I am no speaker; if I were, how I should tell all the people here what blessedness I have found!"

"One of our workers, having paused at a book-stall on the *Quai*, felt himself touched on the shoulder. A young man, whom he did not know, inquired, 'Sir, do you consider that book on prophecy a reliable one?' 'I do not know you,' remarked our friend. 'But, sir, I know you, and am grateful for the word I have heard you speak in the *réunions*.' 'In what *réunions*?' 'At Belleville' (miles away). He then related that, one night when passing the gateway of our mission hall in the Rue de Belleville, the little paper of invitation had been put into his father's hand. Arrived at his home outside the fortifications, he read it: '*Des amis anglais et français désirent vous parler de l'amour de Jésus-Christ.*' 'Some English and French friends wish to speak to you of the love of Jesus Christ.' 'The love of Jesus Christ!' said he to his wife. 'Then we must go one of these evenings and hear what this is.' 'Now,' added the young man, 'my father and mother and all the family attend as often as possible; and more than this, we have all accepted Christ as our Saviour.'"

A poor man was touched by the happy appearance of some Christian neighbours, and asked them what made them so calm and happy even in trouble. They answered that it was the assurance that their sins were forgiven, and that it was in the meeting they had found peace. This man began to attend the meetings, and felt his conscience troubled, for he was living in sin. On his way home he several times said to —, "I am a lost man; I cannot be forgiven; there is no pardon for me." One night he remained with the —'s till midnight, crying and saying, "I am lost!" — said to him, "If you would believe that Jesus died to wash

away your sins, you would be saved. Accept the pardon from God, and forsake your sin, and you will be happy." "But I could never break loose from my sins," said the poor man. "Pray to God, and he will give you strength to do it," said —, at the same time asking him to read with him the passages where God says to us that if we believe in Jesus we shall be saved. He soon after was enabled to decide. The separation he alluded to took place, and the man was happy, looking as if an enormous weight had fallen from him.

"Madame — is an old peasant woman, who has long attended the meeting at the Boulevard Ornano with her son. For a long while her mind seemed impenetrably dark, and our Bible-woman in her visits found it almost impossible to raise her thoughts above the cares and troubles of her life, of which she was always complaining. One day, however, she took her a little book of selected texts of Scripture, very simple, and in large type, begging her to try and spell it out for herself. On her next visit, instead of the old murmurings and complainings, she found the old lady quite cheerful, and she could speak of nothing but the little book. When told that she might keep it always, she kissed it with delight, saying, 'This is the Book of books. I don't think there can be another like it. It is God himself who speaks in it from beginning to end.' Another day she said, 'Perhaps you will be a little the cause of my going to heaven, since it was you who gave me the little book that tells how to get there.' When asked if she felt sure of going to heaven, she replied, 'Oh, I don't know; I dare not say so. I am afraid of deceiving myself, I am such a sinner.' The poor little book is now so worn and blackened by use that it is scarcely readable; but by this time she knows the words so well by heart, there is little need to see them."

Another, who long attended the Ornano meeting, and has lately been brought to the truth, said, "I would not give up my faith in Jesus for all the riches in the world. I am very poor, but it seems to me that even if I were left with nothing but my Bible—and my *spectacles*—I could still be the happiest of women. My one fear now is lest I should again fall into sin, *even in thought*."

"Mme. —, a poor woman who, like the man told of, experienced great anguish after having heard the gospel at the *réunions*, also renounced her sin, and accepted pardon, after a terrible struggle of twelve or fifteen months against the enemy, who does not so easily let go his prey. Her case is truly a marvellous work. She is a brand plucked from the fire. Before coming to the meetings, this dear woman did not even know that she had an immortal soul, or that there was a God who thought of her. She drank iniquity like water; and now she is a child reconciled to her heavenly Father. She said to me lately, 'O Madame, I am so unhappy when temptation comes; and when I am estranged from God, what sadness I feel! And then what joy fills my soul when I find him again! Oh, I should like every one to experience for himself the same happiness!'"

It is told that once, among the Red Indians, a missionary in his journeyings came upon a chief who was sick unto death. He found, to his surprise, that the man was a Christian. On asking how long it was since he became a believer in Christ, the dying Indian replied,

"*Ever since I first heard of him.*" Almost like this has been the simple faith of some of those Paris converts, to whom the gospel came as glad tidings which they had never heard before. But is it not to be feared that thousands will read this tract who have known *about* salvation all their lives, and yet up to this hour are as utterly "without Christ" as if Christ had never come into the world? But "yet there is room." Reader! what the gospel has done for those people in Paris, it waits to do for you.

The gospel of Christ is *light*. It has poured its light into Paris; and it has the same light for sinners everywhere. The good news of God's free love are the only news which can light up a dark world or a dark soul.

The gospel of Christ is *liberty*. It breaks the chains of evil that have bound the sons of men. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The gospel is *peace*. It is the good news of the peace which was made on Calvary 1800 years ago for sinners. It was made by means of that blood which was then shed—the blood of him on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid. (Isaiah liii. 5.)

This gospel has brought peace to many a troubled soul in Paris. And it presents the same finished peace to every reader of these lines. With peace come holiness and righteousness. For the peace received into the soul transforms the whole man, making all things new. (2 Cor. v. 17.)

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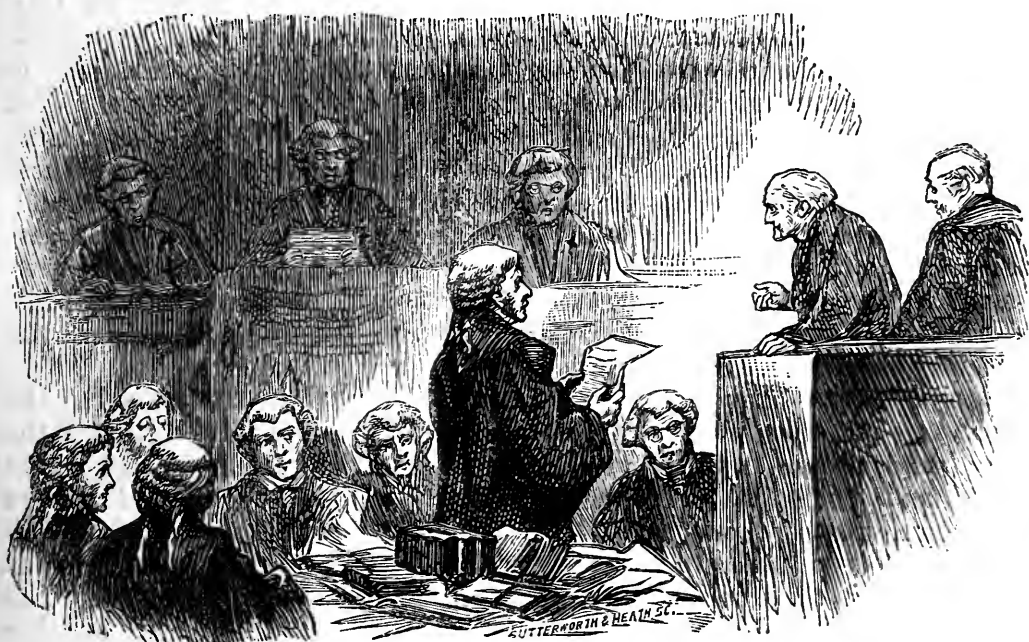
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MAY 1879.

THE TRIAL AND THE SENTENCE.



IN Edinburgh, on 20th January 1879, there began a trial of exceeding interest. Seven men appeared at the bar. The City of Glasgow Bank, of which they had been the manager and directors, had stopped payment, and thousands had been plunged into loss and ruin.

involved, the high social standing hitherto of the prisoners, and the widespread ruin wrought by their means, drew all eyes upon them; and for the twelve days that the trial lasted, the one topic of conversation was the trial of the Bank directors.

The great commercial interests Reader, in imagination, if not in actual fact, you may have been

looking on the scene in that courtroom. Will you look away for a little to another trial, one in which *you* shall be at the bar? Listen to some of God's words about

I. THE TRIAL.—It is *certain*. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 17.) The time of it is fixed—"He hath appointed a *day* in which he will judge the world." (Acts xvii. 31.) How much more vividly we ~~can realize~~ a future event when the day for it is fixed! Well, the day when we shall stand before God in judgment is fixed. Every morning brings us nearer to it; every meal we eat lessens the distance between us and it. No unforeseen circumstance can occur to put it off. *The day is fixed.* Yet to us it "will come as a thief," unexpected, in a day that we think not.

II. THE JUDGE.—There is something awful in the power of human law as it is represented and wielded by an earthly judge. The judge sits calmly on the bench. He puts forth no hand. Yet before him the prisoners come; there they remain, hour after hour, day after day, till the evidence has been given, till the verdict has been returned, and the sentence pronounced. They do not like to be there,—they would rather flee away,—yet there they are. Why? Law has laid her mighty hand on them; and brings them before the judge, and keeps them there. At the assize to which we are hastening, Jesus Christ is the Judge; and he is there armed with all the strength of the law of God. Christ the Judge shall be seen in the glory of his power—in the glory of the Father. "And he shall sit on the throne of his glory." "He will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained;"—a Man, the God-Man, is the Judge;—and "every eye shall see him." (Rev. i. 7.)

III. THE PERSONS TO BE TRIED.—

The great interest of the late trial centred in the prisoners at the bar. All sought to see them. Did the people who pressed into the court day by day realize that they were hastening on to be *themselves* judged? A little while ago, these seven men would have said, "Impossible!" to any one who had told them that they would be in the dock on January 20, 1879; but their scorning the idea of it did not prevent it. And so we *all* shall be at the judgment-seat. "Before him shall be gathered all nations," (Matt. xxiv. 32;) "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ," (Rom. xiv. 10;) "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." (Rev. xx. 12.) "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," (Rom. xiv. 12;) "That every one may receive the things done in his body." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Those who shall be tried—who are they? All generations of men, all nations, all colours. Yet each one alone. We shall be judged, not as families, so that the goodness of the parents might save the children; nor as nations; nor as churches; but *one by one*. It seems as if even in that multitude each soul shall feel alone with the Judge. Reader, you and I shall be there!

IV. THE DOCUMENTS.—In the late trial, it was stated that "the table literally groaned under the weight of the books and papers which were brought forward in evidence." There shall be writings at the great assize. Rev. xx. 12: "The books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." What books shall be opened?

1. *The Book of God's Knowledge and Remembrance.*—"A book of remembrance was written before him." (Malachi iii. 16.) How little do we think that every day and hour our

acts are being entered in this book! a book whose record is unerring and complete. Here are no erasures, no "black and red ink" writing; and every act appears connected with its secret motives, followed by its mighty consequences,—every act weighed and measured by the knowledge, and privileges, and convictions of him who performed it.

2. *The Book of the Soul's Memory and Conscience.*—"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." What a strange book our memory is! It is closely written, and many pages in it we can easily read, and do often read; but there are blanks also,—whole pages, and many pages, where the writing seems to have disappeared. As light or heat reveals secrets which had been written with invisible ink, so shall the light of the judgment-day reveal every secret thing—every blank shall be filled up. Our life shall stand out in our own memory even as it does in the book of God's omniscience; and on every page conscience will write "*Amen*" to the sentence of God.

3. *The Book of Life.*—"Another book was opened"—a record of names. "A list of names!" you say. "How uninteresting! Let us pass it over." But ask that young wife: her husband has been fighting his country's battles, and now she is bending over the list of killed and wounded. Tell her, if you have the heart, that a mere list of names is uninteresting. And have we not all, within the last few months, breathlessly scanned sad lists of names—lists that told of suffering and loss, it may be of ruin? And have not our hearts sunk within us, as we read names dear to us and honoured by us,—or as perhaps we read our own names there? Yet what are all these in interest, compared to *this* record? Perhaps you are glad that your name is not in the record of shareholders. Have you ever made

earnest search to find out whether it is "written in heaven"?

On the one hand, we are told that "they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" "shall enter in through the gates into the city," (Rev. xxi. 27;) and on the other, that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 15.) Can it be that you are eager to keep your names out of all earth's lists of injured, wounded, ruined, killed, but quite indifferent as to whether your name is written in heaven?

V. THE WITNESSES.—Who are these? See them waiting! Many, too many to be numbered. All whom in your lifetime you influenced for evil,—souls that you laughed out of their concern for salvation. Satan, the Accuser, will be a witness. THE LORD JESUS himself will be a witness. He will say to every unsaved soul, "*I never knew you.*" Reader! Will he say that to YOU?

At the trial of the City of Glasgow Bank directors, there were witnesses whose chief testimony was, "I knew him, I respected him, I was on intimate terms with him." How is it between Christ and you now? Does he know you as his own? Have you ever had close dealings of giving and taking with him? Have you such daily communion with him that he cannot, *will* not say to you, "*I never knew you*"? Does your heart turn to him alike in joy and in sorrow? Does the thought of Jesus make you glad? Then surely he knows you. If, on the other hand, you turn in your secret heart away from him,—if he is nothing to you,—if you are, on the whole, most comfortable when you can forget him,—and if you continue just as you are, will He not assuredly say to you, "*I never knew you*?"

There shall be witnesses on the other side. We read that "they that be wise shall shine as the firmament," (Dan. xii. 3;) that "the righteous

shall shine forth as the sun," (Matt. xiii. 43;) that this "vile body" is to be fashioned "like unto his glorious body," (Phil. iii. 21;) that "we shall be like him." (1 John iii. 2.) Shall it not be easy then to discern between the righteous and the wicked? Shall there not be a separating to the right hand and to the left, by the horror, the shame, the shrinking, the wail, on one hand; by the "glorious body," the gladness, the likeness to Jesus, the "shining as the sun," on the other?

VI. THE SENTENCE.—"Come, ye blessed of my Father." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.) Think of these words, "Come," "Depart," and all that is implied in them. Are these arbitrary sentences, having no special fitness for those on whom they are pronounced? "COME," says Jesus. And is not this *Come*, from the judgment-seat, the natural result of former coming—the glad consummation of lives that could be described by these words, "To whom coming"? (1 Pet. ii. 4.) And the dread "*Depart*," what is it but the divine seal set to your own choice, your daily, hourly, life-long departing? Each gets as he has chosen, only it looks so different now, and it is *irrevocable*!

Listen to the "*Come*:" it is awful in its unspeakable joy, to those to whom it shall be spoken. Yet it is the old familiar word. In the Bible, Jesus is ever saying, "Come." In your hearts you have heard him say, "Come." Perhaps it was in childhood, perhaps in the hush of some great sorrow, that you heard it. Did you obey the voice? Did you "arise

and go"? Are you now daily coming to Christ? Is your whole being turned towards him? Then assuredly the word he spoke to you on earth, and which you *obeyed*, he shall speak to you, even to yourself, from the great white throne.

"*Depart, ye cursed*."—Why does Jesus say, "Depart"? Because when he said, "Come," they departed. Is there in you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God? (Heb. iii. 12;) then beware, lest he say to you, "*Depart*." Are you turning to God the back and not the face? (Jer. xxxii. 33;) then assuredly he shall "in that day" say to you, "Depart!"

"And these *shall go away*."—Think again of the trial in Edinburgh. The verdict is declared. The anxious night of waiting is past. The sentence is pronounced. The trap-door opens, and *they go away*. These men, for the last twelve days the objects of such eager curiosity, go away,—down that stair, to prison garb, to prison treatment, to prison companionship, to prison solitude, to come up no more. They go away,—out of sight, but *living*,—out of sight, but carrying memory with them, the very brightness of the past adding a deeper darkness to the present. Shall it not speak to us of that left-hand company, "*These shall go away*!" From what blessedness shall they go! To what darkness of misery, remorse, perdition! They would not come to Jesus for life, and—*they shall go away*.

Reader, is it possible that YOU shall go away? May God forbid!

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JULY 1879.

GOD'S QUESTIONS.



See page 2.

GOD'S QUESTIONS—What are they? Perhaps the very sound of the words makes some persons uncomfortable. They do not like being questioned, especially if they know they must give an answer. They know there are things lying deep down in their hearts which they do not wish to be asked about. They think of a court of law, and the judge listening, while bit by bit the truth is drawn out from the witnesses. They have uneasy thoughts of how difficult it must be in such a case to avoid telling the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth. And if difficult with an earthly judge, they feel it would be impossible, useless even to try, with the Judge of all the earth.

But surely there are others who

ask us questions, of whom none need be afraid. When we are ill, and the doctor is sent for, how kindly he inquires what we feel, what we want, what he can do for us! And we answer all he asks gladly—nay, we tell him things he has not asked at all, hoping they will help him to cure us. Thus we find that it is the questioner, rather than the questions, that we fear. If we know God as the Saviour and Deliverer, then we love to hear his voice; but if we are without God and without hope in the world, well may we shrink from his word as from a sword.

But God's questions are asked all the same, whether we like them or not. Are they not written in his book? and do not they make themselves heard sooner or later in our ears, in our consciences? We may shut the one, and sear the other, but we cannot keep them out. There was a man, not long ago, who resolved not to listen to what God had to say to him. But there were two things he cared for—music and little children. And so one night he went to a children's service to hear the children sing. Determined to hear nothing else, he put a finger in each ear. But God did not need man's help to unstop those deaf ears. A fly from the ceiling sweeps round the old man's head; he shakes his white hair, but never a finger does he stir. At last the fly settles on his face; he dashes his hand forward to knock it off. As he does so, the words fall on his open ear, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" So that was what his ears were given to him for! Before he left the room that night there had entered, through the unstoppered ears, the word of life into his heart.

But not only will God have the questions heard,—they must be answered too. Man tries not to think so; at least he thinks there may be delay, and with delay some

way out of it at the last. So he tries excuse, like Adam, (Gen. iii. 9-12;) or escape from the presence of the Lord, like Cain, (Gen. iv. 10-16;) or he hardens his heart, like Pharaoh, (Ex. x. 3, ix. 35;) or he defies the Lord and his power, like Goliath, (1 Sam. xvii. 26). God's first question to man, "Where art thou?" (Gen. iii. 9) found him hiding: God's last question, "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 17) finds man trying to hide still. This is a fearful thought to the unforgiven sinner—that *there is no getting away from God!*

I. *The questions God puts to the sinner.*—Two of these have been already named, the first and last questions of the Bible—"Where art thou?" (Gen. iii. 9), and "*The great day of His (the Lamb's) wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*" (Rev. vi. 17.) Now both of these questions are of the kind the sinner shrinks from,—of which he is afraid; both tell of sin, guilt, and a judgment day. But mark the riches of the goodness and forbearance of God. (Rom. ii. 3-5.) These questions of judgment are asked in the day of grace. He who asks them is the same as he who wept over Jerusalem. They speak to warn the sinner to flee from wrath to come, to point him to **One** who is both the Just One and the "Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) No sooner had Adam and Eve fallen than God drew nigh. They did not seek him; he came to find them. They could have no hope of such a thing. "Thou shalt surely die" was yet ringing in their ears. They hid themselves from God under the trees. But the word of the Lord is quick and powerful; it found them out. "Where art thou?" brought them to their senses. God's question discovers them to themselves. They can do nothing but tell the truth;

they plead guilty. This is the attitude God's question, "Where art thou?" must still call forth in the awakened sinner. It finds him, may be, proud and prosperous in some refuge of lies. But what about the hours of sleeplessness, or secret sin? What of the deeds done in darkness? Sooner or later, "*Where art thou?*" rings in his ear. But close after it follows another of God's questions, "*Why will ye die?*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11;) and yet another, "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matt. xvi. 26.) Oh, if such a voice reach you, turn right round, we beseech you, even though you have to face God and an accusing conscience. Cast yourself at Jesus' feet, and cry, "Lord, save me, or I perish." But being afraid of the punishment of sin, and even being sick of its weary weight, may exist, without readiness to forsake it. To these we can but leave one last solemn question, "*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*" (Heb. ii. 3.)

II. But now let us turn to *God's questions to the sick and sorrowful, the poor and needy*. Most of us know something of dark days, and dreary; and how at such times has a word fitly spoken unlocked our hearts, and carried in a ray of light at last! Even the look of an eye, or the touch of a hand, can do it. For the secret of their power is the loving heart behind. We remember once of a young girl going through a lunatic asylum. By and by she was led into a room where there was but one patient—a young girl of the same age as herself. She was standing in the corner of the room, her face almost touching the wall. In stony hopelessness she stood. She neither looked nor spoke. She might have been dead, but that she still stood on. It was a terrible sight. "Will you speak to

her?" asked the doctor. "We can do nothing with her. She has been thus for days. But one like herself might move her." The young lady, deeply moved, with one upward cry for help, stepped forward, laid her hand on the listless form, and, with tears in her eyes, spoke one sentence of yearning sympathy and compassion. The poor patient turned, gazed for one moment, and burst into tears! The medical man exclaimed, "Thank God, she may be saved!" The visitor could never recall the words she had used. But they had done their work. This poor, wrecked girl, who thought that nobody knew—nobody cared—had felt the heart that pitied her, the hand stretched out to help her. But it is surely no wonder that *we* should so feel for one another. What is so wonderful is, that there is no pain in our body, no ache in our soul, no trial in our lot, but that it is felt for and provided for by the Lord of glory. He looks on the afflicted ones, ready to say they are forsaken and forgotten, and he asks, "Can a woman forget hersuckingchild, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. xlix. 15.) He looks on others, not forgotten, but forgetting, bent on backsliding, and he says, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. . . . O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." (Hos. xi. 8, xiii. 9.)

Was there ever love like this? Can our nature, can our need, ask more supply? And yet the treasure-house is fuller still! Think of the life of Christ on earth. Is any afflicted, weak, and weary? crushed and helpless under the burden of twenty, thirty, it may be forty, years of disease and misery? Jesus says, and says to thee, "Wilt thou be made whole?" You can do nothing;

but he can do all things. He can, and he will, if you but cast yourself upon him. Remember the sinner brought to Jesus by those who knew so well her life, and remember the question of hope addressed to her: "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John viii. 10, 11.) To Martha, when her brother Lazarus had lain four days in the grave, Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, *though he were dead*, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John xi. 25, 26.) This question he asks, this assurance he gives *you*—"Believest thou this?" May your answer be, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!"

III. *God's questions to his people.*—To them he has many things to say which others would not understand. Call to mind again Christ's life on earth; his separation and loneliness as the Man of Sorrows, no less than as the Messiah; how he sought for faith, understanding, sympathy. "Do ye now believe?" is the wistful question, even at the last. (John xvi. 31.) What would he not have told them, if they had only been able to hear! What would he not have given them, if they would but have received! And is it not so now? We make our souls poor by what we miss, as well as what we lose. Oh, the depths in the questions of Christ to his children! What glimpses they give into his heart! What full light they throw on your heart and mine! We know so little

of him that he has to ask, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" But there are sadder questions still. Has there never been a time when he still seems to say, "Will ye also go away?" (John viii. 68.) Are there no hours in which he still has need of us, still looks to us,—only for us to fail him, and to hear that most wonderful, most sorrowful of questions, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. xxvi. 40.) Has none of us known what it is to fall, like Peter? and like Peter to have our hearts wrung, and yet restored by our Lord's "Lovest thou me?" (John xxi. 15.) Oh, wonder of wonders! that after denial and desertion, after fall so terrible and misery so great, no word of reproach should meet us,—only, "Lovest thou me? Lovest thou me more than these?"

All God's questions are personal and pointed. May each of us ask, "Lord, is it I?" And in those belonging to us we shall hear his voice saying, "Thou art the man."

Especially may each of us think upon one question more, and what *we* have to say to it. It is a question for the sinner, the sufferer, and the saint alike; one which sums up all others, and on which life and death may be said to hang: "*What think ye of Christ?*" (Matt. xxii. 42.) HE is your questioner; he will be your judge. *What is he more to you?* Can you answer, "Christ is all and in all to me"? "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1879.

BROWNLOW NORTH.



BROWNLOW NORTH was born in London, 6th January 1810. He was of noble family. Cousin to the Earl of Guildford, who had no son, he was welcomed at his birth as the heir to the earldom. But in this he was disappointed, the succession passing to a son, subsequently born, of his father's eldest brother. His father

was rector of Alverstoke; his mother, a godly woman, sought to train him in the fear of God. But he was a wayward, careless boy. His six years at Eton, where he was known as "Gentleman Jack," were little better than wasted in idleness and frolic.

At fifteen he went to Corfu with Lord Guildford, who, as Chancellor of

the Ionian Islands, founded a theological college there. It was hoped that the classes and the influence he was under would prove for his good. It was not so. At last, finding one day the window of his class-room turned into the last barrier for a steeplechase, Lord Guildford sent him home as beyond his control.

He then set off, under charge of a tutor, to make "the grand tour" of the Continent. On their very first night in Paris, he caught his tutor in a gaming saloon. Having now the tutor in his power, he insisted, on pain of exposure, that all books and study should be left behind. During their journeying to Rome, he won from the tutor all the money entrusted to him for their expenses. Becoming master thus both of his tutor and of himself, he was now left free, full swing, "to follow," as he used often to express it, "the evil devices of his own heart."

He found himself, at the age of nineteen, a married man, without a profession. His sole income was about £300 a year, from the registrarship of the diocese of Winchester, given him by his grandfather, the bishop. For more money, he betook himself to gambling. From debts which he had no means of discharging, he fled to France. Thence, as a volunteer, in 1835, he joined Don Pedro's army in Portugal. After a few months, he again returned home.

For the next four years Mr. North lived chiefly in the north of Scotland, shooting during the season from morning to night, and wintering in Aberdeen. One winter, twice, on two successive days, dancing at a ball all the night between, he rode on horseback, for two bets of £50 each, which he won, from Aberdeen to Huntly and back, a distance of 80 miles, within eight hours each time.

At that time he was not without stings of conscience, and the strivings of the Spirit in his soul. His deepest

impressions, up to the time when the great change came, occurred in 1839. The incident was thus told by the late Duchess of Gordon:—"Sitting at dinner beside me at Huntly Lodge, suddenly he said to me with much gravity, 'Duchess, what should a man do who has often prayed to God and never been answered?' I lifted up my heart to God to teach me what to say. I looked him quietly in the face, and said, so as not to be overheard by others, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' (Jas. iv. 3.) His countenance changed, he became very greatly moved, was very quiet during the evening, and thanked me ere he left."

Shortly after this, he became so impressed with the folly of his past life that he resolved upon an entire change. He determined to study at Oxford, and to enter the Church of England. He took his degree in 1842.

At Oxford he had increased in knowledge, but soon his convictions melted away, and he threw himself openly into his old life of pleasure and of sin. To a relative he wrote, "To die the death of the righteous, we must live the life of the righteous, dear auntie, and I am not prepared for that yet." He often afterwards made, before thousands, the fearful confession, that at this time he had distinctly rejected the great salvation, and had virtually said to God, "I must have my sins. I know the consequences, but I accept them; I accept damnation as my portion." "Thus, spending his time in after-dinner revelry, midnight play, and the other pursuits of what is known as '*fast life*,' he continued to live till the autumn of 1854, when he was nearly 45 years of age."

But now "the night is far spent: the day is at hand." His decisive change he thus described to the students of Edinburgh University, in March 1862:—

"It pleased God," he said, "in

the month of November 1854, one night when I was sitting playing at cards, to make me concerned about my soul. The instrument used was a sensation of sudden illness, which led me to think that I was going to die. I said to my son, 'I am a dead man, take me up-stairs.' As soon as this was done, I threw myself down on the bed. My first thought then was, Now, what will my forty-four years of following the devices of my own heart profit me? In a few minutes I shall be in hell, and what good will all these things do me for which I have sold my soul? At that moment I felt constrained to pray, but it was merely the prayer of the coward,—a cry for mercy. I was not sorry for what I had done, but I was afraid of the punishment of my sin. And yet still there was something trying to prevent me putting myself on my knees to call for mercy, and that was the presence of the maid-servant in the room, lighting my fire. By the grace of God I did put myself on my knees before that girl, and I believe it was the turning-point with me. I believe that if I had at that time resisted the Holy Ghost—of course I cannot say, for who shall limit the Holy Ghost?—but my belief is that it would have been *once too often*. By God's grace I was *not* prevented. I did pray; and though I am not what I should be, yet I am this day what I am, which at least is not what I was."

On the very next day, to the friends staying in the house, and to others by letter, he declared that he had become a changed man. But though from that time outwardly a new creature, there was no "healing of the hurt slightly." He passed through a period of anguish for his sins so deep, that to one who saw him afterwards he seemed like a man weakened and subdued by long bodily illness. In prayer, and in searching his Bible, he sought for peace. It was months ere he fully found it.

He tells that one night, unable to sleep, he rose and was reading the third chapter of Romans, when a new light seemed to break upon his mind. "But now the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, *for there is no difference.*' (Rom. iii. 21, 22.) With that passage came light into my soul. Striking my book with my hand, and springing from my chair, I cried, 'If that scripture be true, I am a saved man! That is what I want; that is what God offers me; that I will have.' God helping me, it was that I took,—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, WITHOUT THE LAW. It is my ONLY hope."

Among his old companions his conversion made no small stir. Some said he had gone out of his mind; others, that it was only a sham, or a religious fit, which would soon pass over. In some of the newspapers, even after he had begun his public work, it was said that it was all a trick—done for a wager that he would gather so many thousands to hear him. Even Christian people, who knew his old ways and former convictions, stood in doubt of him, as the disciples did of Paul. (Acts ix. 26.)

But now, brought into the "glorious liberty," no one was long left in doubt. In visits to the sick and poor, and by small meetings in his own neighbourhood, he began to preach the faith he had once done so much to destroy. The remarkable blessing on his work, and invitations from all quarters, he accepted as indications that he was not going forth unsent. "I am not an authorized preacher," he used to say, "but I'll tell you what I am,—I am a man who has been at the brink of the bottomless pit, and has looked in, and as I see many of you going down to that pit, I am here to 'hollo' you back, and to warn you

of your danger. I am here, also, as chief of sinners, saved by grace, to tell you that the grace which has saved me can surely save you." By the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, on 27th May 1859, he was unanimously and warmly "recognised as an evangelist."

Of his remaining life-work, during twenty years, space is not left for even the merest mention. He "went everywhere, preaching the word." In Edinburgh, and all parts of Scotland,—in London, and many of the chief towns of England,—and in Ireland, his visits are held in affectionate remembrance, as having brought life to many souls. His intensely interesting memoir, by the Rev. Kenneth Moody-Stuart, Moffat, (to whose kindness we are indebted for almost the whole of our present materials,) reveals the extent both of the labours and of the fruits of his memorable ministry. Among his papers, after death, were found "letters from peers and peeresses, Indian rajahs and German princesses, professional men, busy merchants, acute lawyers, soldiers and sailors, squatters in the Australian bush; from young ladies, from boys, from governesses, students, footmen, letter-carriers, domestic servants, farm servants, etc. etc., *all bearing on the one great question.*" "Learned," from his own bitter experience, "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," he knew what the devil, and the world, and the flesh could do for a man, and what they could not. Hence, perhaps, his marvellous power, by the blessing of God, in startling the

sinner, in rooting him out from his refuges of lies, and in bringing him to an absolute surrender to the sovereign mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Mr. North died at Tillichewan Castle, Dumbartonshire, on Tuesday, 9th November 1875. To one standing by he said, "You are young, in good health, and with the prospect of rising in the army. I am dying; but if the Bible is true, *and I know it is*, I would not change places with you for the whole world." "*Perfect peace*" were the last words of his faith and hope. On the following Friday, among many to whom his name and his memory are dear, we accompanied his remains, from the house of his friend Mr. Brown Douglas, to the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh.

Reader! Brownlow North, being dead, yet speaketh. What saith that life—that death—to us all? Let himself answer, in such piercing words as some who now read them perhaps have heard from his own lips:—

"The precise moment will come when you will have been five minutes in eternity."

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon. It is not said, 'do not,' but 'cannot.'"

"Godliness with contentment is great gain; but contentment without godliness is the greatest curse."

"No one can prevent you being saved but yourself. If you die the second death, you must be a suicide. God will say to you in the judgment, Thou hast destroyed thyself."

"Next to losing your soul, fear losing your convictions."

Reader! "what shall we then say to these things?"

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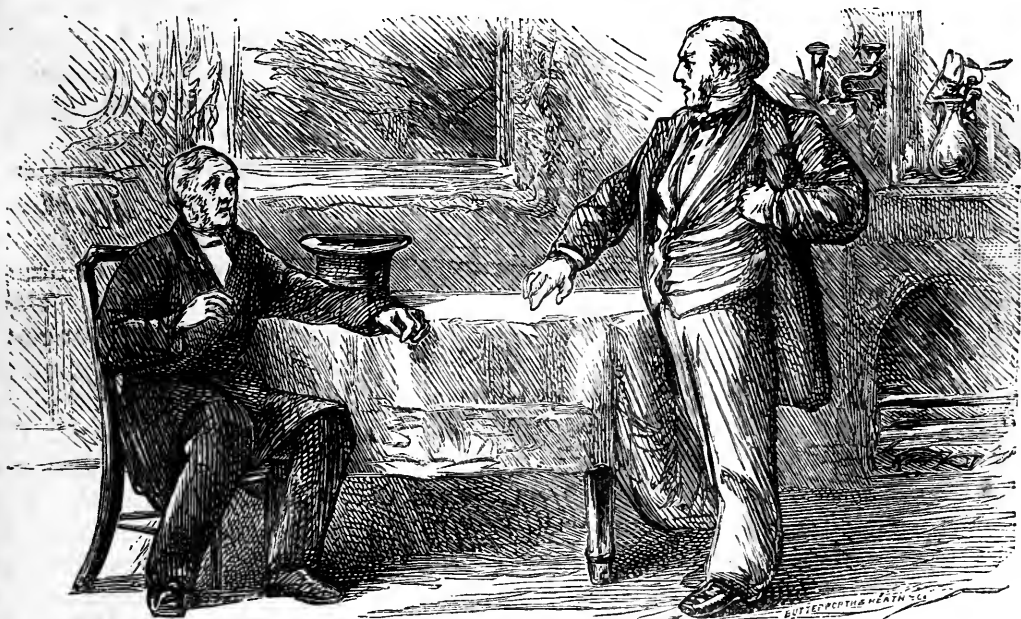
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1879.

THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—1 Tim. i. 15.



PAUL, in all his writings, exhibits great sensitiveness with regard to sin. All systems of religion, except that which is founded upon free grace, in some way or other take off the edge of guilt. If they try to compromise the business, and make salvation to be partly a matter of human effort and human merit, and partly a work of divine grace, they are sure in the process to conceal the exceeding iniquity of sin. Man is made out to be a poor, weak creature, victimized by a law too rigid for his frailty. It is represented that he has a right to mercy, and a great uproar is made if we deny him any such right. But the apostle Paul had been

describing himself and his sin: he confessed that he was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, "but," saith he, "I obtained mercy." His was an instance of a sinner saved, and he now declares that his case was a type of all others, for Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The tendency is to set up the apostle as an exceptional convert, but he corrects the idea by asserting the grand doctrine that the Saviour's errand was to those who are guilty and undeserving, among whom he counted himself to be the chief.

I. Our first observation from this statement will be THAT SINNERS ARE IN AN AWFUL CONDITION. A man who needs saving is evidently in a very undesirable state. Now, every man and woman among you this day who has not been saved by Christ Jesus, needs saving. You have kept the law, you say, from your youth up, and what do you lack? My answer is, that you need saving notwithstanding your fine ideas about yourselves. But you have been religious also from your earliest recollection, and you do not know that you have ever committed anything very wrong. Dear friend, despite your morality and outward religiousness, we are compelled to tell you that you need saving just as surely as the unchaste or the profane. Despite all that you say in your own favour, you have broken the law of God, and you are a sinner, and as a sinner you are in a terrible position, from which nothing can save you but the hand of God.

For, first, *it is a grave peril to be a sinner.* You have broken your Maker's command: is not that a calamity? You have neglected his will, which is holy, and just, and good: is not that a crying evil? To have a heart which does not choose the right, but which leans to evil, is not that ruinous? To have a mind which

does not love God, but cares for itself more than for its Maker and Lord, is not that to be in a diseased state of soul? You are not in a fit state to judge, but holy beings think it so. The polluting influence of sin upon the soul is the direst of all mischiefs, the worst of all destructions,—it is spiritual death. From the defiling presence of sin every man needs to be saved.

Moreover, *the thrice holy God hates sin* with a hatred scarcely to be conceived by any of us, since we have lost the sensitiveness of perfect purity. O sinner, what a plight you are in, since there is in you and upon you the sin which God cannot endure! What must your position be! for it is written concerning the Lord, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity!" and such are you. Can you bear the thought?

Furthermore, *you are condemned,* and before long this will be made evident to all intelligent beings. It is not possible that it should be otherwise, for there must come a reaping to every sowing. Idle thoughts, and idle words, and evil deeds, must bear their fruit, and hence every sinner is in danger of eternal fire. As surely as the righteous through Christ shall go into everlasting happiness, so shall the ungodly depart into everlasting punishment, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. And this may happen to any unpardoned sinner before he has heard the next word which I am about to utter; he may find himself shut out from all hope, eternally shut out from God, ere yonder clock shall strike. This is a perilous condition for an immortal soul. Yet every sinner not saved by Christ is in this condition!

To this may be added the further reflection, that *the sinner is quite unable of himself to escape*, either from sin itself, or from the wrath which he has aroused, or from the punishment which is appointed for his trans-

gressions. What canst thou do, O Ethiopian, to change thy skin? O leopard, how canst thou remove thy spots? And if, being evil, thou couldst learn to do good, how couldst thou put away the sin of the past? By what process couldst thou take out the stains of former years? Do not the sins of thy youth lie in thy bones even to this day? and they must be there for ever, unless the strong hand of Christ shall take them away. O unforgiven man, what thinkest thou of this? O sinner, you are awfully lost, you are infinitely lost, since it needs an infinite Saviour to present the atonement of his own body in order to save sinners from their sin. This is the first truth, then, which is included in this faithful saying; may the Holy Ghost write it on our hearts!

II. CHRIST JESUS CAME TO SAVE MEN *AS SINNERS*. His salvation is meant for men who are sinners, and for none else. This is a fact scarcely ever realized; indeed, its real meaning is not known until God the Holy Ghost reveals it. A great many persons have a notion that Christ Jesus came into the world to save respectable people, who, if they have done any wrong, have repented of it, and have made things square,—persons who do their very best, by attendance at worship, and taking the sacrament, and giving to the poor, and paying their way, and saying their prayers. These are doing all they can to get right, and keep right, and surely they will be saved! So men talk. Their theory of salvation is very mixed, but it comes to this, that the gospel is for good people. They do not quite do without Jesus Christ,—he comes in somewhere or other; but their religion is a kind of mingle-mangle. Partly they save themselves, and partly Christ saves them, and between the two they are not saved at all. Their vain fancy is

that, though they cannot do quite as much as they ought, Jesus comes in as an excellent make-weight, and turns the scale in their favour. Now we lay down this straight line, that Christ did not come into the world to save anybody but sinners, and he viewed those sinners as sinners, and nothing more. The text saith nothing more and nothing less than that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners* ;” there is not a qualifying word.

It is clear that sinners only are the objects of salvation, for none but sinners need saving; and if there had been no sinners, there would certainly have been no *saving*, and no *Saviour*. Who wants saving but a lost man?

Upon this point special clearness is required. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners *as sinners*, must always be kept clearly before the human mind; because, as I have said, man does not like the notion, and if you put it boldly he cavils at it. Hear him mutter, about immoral doctrine, and encouraging sin. Hear it, and marvel at the audacity which makes a guilty rebel express anxiety about the morals of his God. A set of criminals are shut up in a condemned cell to be hanged, and a message comes that the king freely forgives them, and they exclaim that they will not accept mercy because it might encourage immorality. Morality! What have these law-breakers to do with that? They are living in sin, and yet pretend to be the guardians of universal justice! Vile hypocrisy! Shall a condemned man cavil at mercy’s freeness? On your knees, sir, and plead guilty before the Most High, for so only shall you find grace. You are forgiven, or else you are “condemned already;” and unless Jesus Christ saves you, you will abide in condemnation for ever and ever. Sinner, all the hope you can ever have lies in Him who died upon the tree. As for

yourself, settle it in your mind that you are as bad as bad can be. Give over all hope from your own doings, willings, feelings, and resolves, and no more expect to obtain comfort from your own nature than to find fire in the midst of a rock of ice. Look right away from self to Christ, and Christ alone, for this is the way of salvation.

Beware of the slippery belief that Christ died for you as long as you remain humble, or as long as you are this or that; for if you talk in that fashion, instead of trusting in Christ you are trusting in your own humility, your own feelings, and there is no soundness in your faith.

There is nothing like free grace to change the human heart. You may tell a man what he is, and what he ought to be, and he will remain unmoved; but tell him that God meets him as a lost, guilty, and condemned sinner, and that, simply because he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, he blots out all his sins and transgressions, and accepts him through Jesus Christ, why, that makes the man's heart leap within him for joy, and then he begins to say, "Cleanse me, O God, from this hateful sin; for I love thee because of thy wondrous love to me."

III. I close by saying, Let us, dear friends, feel THAT IT WILL BE WISE TO ACCEPT AT ONCE THE TEACHING OF THE TEXT. Confess your sinfulness. Does it trouble you to do so? Have not you abundant evidence of it? Do not confess it with your mouth only, but with your heart.

Confess your sin, and when you have done so, rest on the salvation provided in Jesus Christ.

Poor sinner, whoever you may be, surely this is a very simple matter; but do not reject it because it is so simple. It is your life. You shall find it your life at this very instant, if you will trust my Lord. Have you any doubt about your being a sinner? Then bid farewell to hope, for Christ did not come to save you; but if you know you are a sinner, cast yourself on Jesus now, even now, just as you are. Are you still holding to your prayers, or your tears, or somewhat of your own? You will perish if you do.

"You have taken away from us, sir, every hope we ever had, and you make us out to be nothing but sinners." Yes, that is what I want to do. I long to make all things rock and reel under you, till you feel that you have no place for the sole of your feet, and so fall before the Cross. This old house of yours, which you have been patching up so often, will fall upon you before long. Clear the ground of the whole concern. None but Jesus, none but Jesus! Neither beam, nor stone, nor pin, nor nail must be our own. What say you, brother sinner? Will you and I have Christ? I will, whether you will or not. Come along. Do not draw back. Take what God freely presents to you, and from this day trust Jesus to be your Saviour, and we will meet in heaven. Amen.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon
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THE HARVEST PAST.



See page 3.

I WAS hastily summoned to the bedside of a sick man, by the urgent request of his mother. He was about twenty-six years of age, was married, and the father of one little child. I had never spoken to him. Whenever I had visited the family, he had either been absent from home, or intentionally kept himself out of my sight. He was industrious, pro-

sperous, and, as a man of the world, bore a good character.

His father was a sceptic, and the son had imbibed his principles. His mother had also requested me to converse with the old man, her husband; but he very soon excused himself, by pretending that he could not spare the time. I had also known him to leave the house and go off into the

field when he knew that I had called to see his family. His son, who was now sick, had also, as I suppose, avoided me in the same manner. He still resided in the house with his parents, who had also another son, a lad about twelve years of age.

The sick man's mother met me, calm, but evidently in the most heart-rending distress. When I entered his room, he turned away his face towards the wall, as if he regarded me with horror. I offered him my hand, which he seemed reluctant to take. I inquired about his sufferings, expressing the hope that he might soon be relieved. In an accent of intolerable agony he exclaimed, "*Oh, I shall die! I shall die!*" "I hope not," said I, "by this sickness. I think the doctor will be able to relieve you." "The doctor has done what he could," said he. "My time has come! I cannot live! Oh, I shall die!" Raising himself up, he threw himself back upon the bed and drew the covering over his face.

I again attempted to soothe his agitation. I asked him several questions. He made me no answer, but stretching up both his hands, he raised himself on his bed, and uttered the single syllable "*Oh!*" with dreadfulness of accent, and a prolongation of the sound. "Has your pain returned?" Without looking at me, he exclaimed in a tone of horror, "Oh! oh! oh!" His wife, sobbing aloud, left the room. I then said to him, "God is merciful. He is the hearer of prayer; and if you are"—

"*Oh!*" was the dreadful sound which interrupted me. Every one of the family hurried into the room where he was. Among others was his little brother, the only person he seemed to notice.

"Shall I pray with you?" said I.

He turned his face away from me towards the wall, and again drew the

clothes over his head. We knelt by his bed-side, and I aimed to pray in such a manner that he might be soothed and encouraged by the idea of the mercy of God towards sinners through our Lord Jesus Christ. When we rose from our knees, he exclaimed, as he fixed his eyes firmly upon me, "It will do no good to pray *for me, sir.*" I waited for him to say more, but as he did not, I replied, "God is the hearer of prayer. He has encouraged us to pray to him. *He* has not said that it will do no good to pray." "*My day has gone by!*" said he. "It is too late for me!—it is too late!" "No, sir, it is *not* too late. If you want God's mercy, you may have it. God himself says so: 'Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely.' You ought to think of the death of Christ for sinners—of the mercy of God."

"*Mercy!—mercy!*" he vociferated; "*that is what makes my situation so dreadful! I have scoffed at God! If God were only just, I could bear it. But now the thought of mercy, which I have despised, is worst of all! There is no mercy for me any longer! For years I have refused Christ! My day has gone by! I am lost! I am lost!*" "You think wrong," said I. "God has not limited his invitations. Christ says, 'Come unto me, *all* ye that labour, and are heavy laden.'"
"My day has gone by," said he. "No, it has *not*," I replied, in a voice as firm as his own. "The Lord says, 'Behold, *now* is the accepted time—*now* is the day of salvation.'"

"That is not for *me!*" said he. "I have had my time, and lost it! I have spent all my life for nothing! I have been a fool all my days, and now I am dying! I have sought for nothing but this world! I have refused to attend to God, and now he has taken hold of me, and I cannot escape!" The family, much affected, retired from the room.

"You have time still to seek him

—to repent and flee to Christ. You have time now—to-day. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. You may be saved.’ ‘You think so,’ said he, ‘but I know better!—I know better! It is too late! I am dying, sir.’ ‘Christ accepted the dying thief,’ said I. ‘God is so rich in mercy, that he pardons sinners at the eleventh hour.’ ‘The eleventh hour is past!’ said he. ‘This is the twelfth hour! God’s time of vengeance has come! I have had my time, and lost it! It is all gone! I have loved the world only, and now I must leave it! What is the world to me? I have been a fool all my days!’ As I was aiming to convince him of the mercy of God, and referring to the Scriptures, all I could say did not seem to weigh a feather with him.

His wife and his mother, hearing our conversation, had returned. And just as he was uttering some exclamations about his love of the world and his folly, his father entered the room, saying, ‘Why, you need not feel so bad; you have never done any hurt to anybody.’

‘Don’t talk to me, father!’ said he in a tone of authority, or rather of hatred and anger. ‘You have been my worst enemy! You have ruined me! You led me to disobey God, and neglect the Bible! You took me off to fish, and hunt, and stroll around the fields on Sundays, when mother wanted me to go to church. You told me there was no hell—that all men would be saved. And don’t come here now to try to deceive me any longer! You have done your work! You have been my ruin! Oh, if I had minded mother, and not you, I should not have come to such an end! Don’t cry, mother, don’t cry so;’ he heard her sobbing. ‘Oh, I would give a thousand worlds to have your religion—or any part of it—or anything like it! But I am lost! I am lost! You told me, father, there was no hell, and I tried to believe it. I

joined you in wickedness when I knew better. I have laughed at hell, and now hell laughs at me. God will punish sinners!’ His father attempted to say something to him, ‘Quit, father! Don’t talk to me! Your lies cannot deceive me any longer! You have ruined my soul! Where is my brother?’ His wife replied, ‘He is out in the garden, I believe. Shall I call him?’ ‘Yes, call him. He is young. I want to tell him not to believe what father says to him. He will lead him to hell.’

His father, looking at me, remarked, ‘He has had so much fever and pain that his mind is not regular.’ ‘Father, I am no more crazy than you are. You need not deceive yourself with that notion. But you are not deceived. You know better. You try to deceive yourself, just as you try to believe there is no hell. You pretend that all men will be saved, but you don’t believe it. Don’t come here to torment me with your falsehoods now, when I am dying!’

At this moment his little brother, about twelve years of age, entered the room. Calling him by name, and looking tenderly upon him, he said, ‘Come here, my brother. I have been a very wicked man. Don’t do as I have done. Read the Bible. Never swear, or take God’s name in vain. Always go to church on Sundays. Always mind what mother says to you. Father has led me to ruin. If I had done as mother wanted me to do, I might have died in peace. If father ever says there is no hell for the wicked, don’t believe him. There is an awful hell! Remember that I told you so when I was dying!’ The young brother cried aloud in a burst of grief, and rushed out of the room.

While he was talking to his little brother, the father listened for a time apparently unmoved, and then with a sort of stealthy tread went out.

I proposed that I would make a short prayer with him before I left him. "Not here!" said he firmly. "Pray in the other room, mother, if you wish to pray. Do not pray here. I cannot pray. My day is gone by! **THE HARVEST IS PAST.**"

We retired. Before I left the house, I returned again to the room of the sick man. He appeared very uneasy and restless. The doctor came in, asked some questions, and saying he thought he would "be better to-morrow," left him. "I shall be *dead* to-morrow!" said he firmly. Briefly assuring him again of the readiness of Christ to save him, and exhorting him to prayer, I bade him good-bye.

Early the next morning, as I entered the room I was struck with his altered appearance. His voice was sunken and husky, his breathing short and laboured, his look wild and delirious. I offered to pray with him, and he answered, "Prayer comes too late now—**THE HARVEST IS PAST!**" He immediately turned himself on the bed with a shriek, and lay with his face towards the wall; and a moment afterwards he gave utterance only to delirious ravings. His thoughts seemed to run much upon his father, in an unhappy manner. He appeared unwilling to have him in his presence. Towards his mother his manner was entirely different. He was manifestly affectionate towards his wife and his little brother. His eyes would rest upon *them* with a look of fondness, but fix upon his *father* with the look of a fiend. After I had retired from his room for a few minutes, we returned again. I found him sinking fast.

They immediately sent for the doctor. When he came, he found him dead!

Reader, how dangerous it is to neglect the great salvation which God is offering you through the Lord Jesus Christ! The longer you do so, the more fearful the influence which the enemy of souls will have over you, if you trifle with conscience, and with the authority of God's truth, God says, "The wages of sin is death," judgment, eternal perdition; but the devil says, "Don't believe it. Follow your own ways. Never mind God's commandments just yet. Time enough to think of death. Take your fill of pleasure. - God is merciful." Oh, young man, God permits you for a time to take your own course. You are free to follow the lusts of your own evil heart; "but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9.)

But if God hates sin, he loves the sinner. God's love is towards you, sinner as you are. God sent his Son into the world to save sinners, and Jesus Christ saves them by his death in their stead. Because they deserve death, he has endured it on their behalf. He took the curse of sin upon himself, and died under that curse, (Gal. iii. 13;) so that God can now, in love and in righteousness also, freely pardon even the greatest of sinners.

Reader, do you believe this? Will you, then, venture to neglect a salvation which is now, even NOW, while you are reading these lines, lovingly pressed upon you?

Dublin Tract Society.

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MAN'S "FORGETS," AND GOD'S "REMEMBERS."



SIN hates a good memory. If a man be born with one, Satan does his best to steal it away. The child's first excuse is, "I forgot." And children of a larger growth, too, are ready with their "I forgot."

There is one long memory which Satan likes. A great man said of a little man's memory, that it was

nothing but a set of pegs to hang his grudges on. Well, Satan does not object to that. But he likes best when memory is a set of shelves to lay out our own goodness on. So long as the planks of pride are big enough, and the room full enough to keep God and His mercies out, Satan finds this long memory almost more

useful than a short one. Yet, as a rule, a short one serves him best. A long one may recall much that he wishes forgotten, and at any moment it may bring remorse, or some of a "mother's last words" may rise to mind, and then God's half-forgotten "Come," or "Return," may be heard again. Far better for Satan, then, that the sinner should look neither back nor forwards. Let him live and "enjoy himself" for to-day, whatever may come to-morrow.

Satan began tampering with man's memory very early. He must have got at Eve's, in the garden, or she could never have so soon forgotten that God did not say "*Lest ye die*," but "*Ye shall surely die*." Cain, too, seems to have had his help. Not that Cain had really forgotten about Abel when he told God that he knew nothing about him. That was a lie, and not a "forget" at all. But when Cain went straight away out of the presence of the Lord, and builded himself a city, was it not just to get rid of the whole thing, and forget if he could? Like many another, he tried to smother his memory and to strangle his conscience by being very busy about something else.

In the history of the children of Israel, how God's "remembers" and man's "forgets" are set side by side! In Egypt God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant, working wonders for them. (Ex. ii. 24.) But the wonders they understood not; and the mercies they remembered not. (Ps. cvi. 7.) They so soon forgot, that but three days after they cried out for fear, and provoked him at the Red Sea. Again he saved them, leading them through on dry land. For the moment they believed, and sang his praise. Yet they made haste to forget again, this time lusting after meat. And so on and on, until, not content with forgetting his works and his wonders, they forgot himself too. They made a molten calf, and

worshipped it. For the unthankful soon became the unbelieving. The heart that is full of self and its idols has no room for God, no remembrance of him.

This, then, is the summing up of the whole:—

In bondage, they forgot—

But he remembered his covenant, and redeemed them. (Ex. ii. 24.)

In danger, they forgot—

But he remembered his word, and delivered them. (Ps. cvii. 20.)

In hunger, they forgot—

But he remembered his promise, and gave them manna, and water from the rock. (Ps. cv. 41, 42.)

In sin, they forgot—

But he remembered they were but flesh, and turned his anger away. (Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39.)

In prosperity, they forgot—

Then in judgment he remembered mercy, according to the multitude of his mercies. (Ps. cvi. 45.)

And then the worst was, they could remember *when* they liked. Yes, and *what* they liked too. They forgot the bondage and the brickmaking; but they remembered the fleshpots and the fulness of bread. They forgot the toil and the tears; they remembered the melons and the cucumbers. They even remembered God, by fits and starts, as it were,—when he punished them, or when they found out that they needed him. But they fancied the God they thought of was like unto themselves, and so they flattered him. They forged false words, and, worse still, false lives, trying to deceive, hoping he had forgotten.

"Oh yes, they were a dreadful people, the children of Israel!" you say. "How God could bear with them so long, I cannot think! But we are not like them. If we had had ten plagues, and the passover, and the Red Sea passage, not to speak of food from heaven every morning, and the

pillar by night and day, to keep us in mind, we could not have forgotten; no, not if we had tried."

But are you so sure you are better than they? What if God's message to thee this day should be, "*Thou art the man*"? For oh, fellow-sinner, what hast thou *not* forgotten?

Israel forgot the God that formed him. (Deut. xxxii. 18.) Hast thou then remembered thy Creator in the days of thy youth? (Eccles. xii. 1.) Hast thou taken thy life as from God, and used it for him? Or do you take it, day by day, with all its blessings,—air to breathe and health to enjoy, daily work and daily bread,—as a matter of course, as your own property, without one thought of him who gave them all? The heavens praise him, and the earth and every living thing. But man! what of man? what of *you*?

Israel forgot Jehovah-Jireh, the LORD that provided for them. And have you no providences to remember? no rescue from danger? no return from death's door? no provision for need? no escape from evil? Has there been no event, no hour in your life, when you felt you could never forget God again,—yet have gone straight away and been the same man as before? And if there has been little of danger or of dread in your life, remember you owe the more to God's preserving care. A traveller once thanked God his horse had slipped but once on a dangerous road, and he had been saved. "And I," said a fellow-traveller, "thank God that my horse never slipped at all."

Again, if thou art guilty toward the God that made thee, and the God that has kept thee, what of the God of grace—the God that redeemed thee? Well may we take this charge to heart, for here at least the Lord hath done great things for us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, . . . full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) God was made manifest in the flesh, and the Sinless One died for sin. He delivers from a worse bondage than that of Egypt. He leads, he feeds, he guides, he guards. He makes his children one in him now, even as they shall be one with him in glory evermore.

Yet how few receive, how few remember what he has done! The rich man has so many things to think of, and the poor man's few things cost him so many thoughts. Christ still has to say, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Forgetful of him, they yet have builded temples, (Hos. viii. 14,) and made themselves other gods,—riches, or pleasure, or the lust and licence of sin. (Ps. xliv. 20.) Even when tired and sick at heart, they have gone on wandering from mountain to hill, because they have forgotten the Good Shepherd and his resting-place, his place to lie down in. (Jer. l. 6.)

Yet perhaps you say, "But I do remember him. I go regularly to church, and daily say my prayers." O man, God is not mocked. "Is this such a fast as I have chosen?" he asks. And "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting," he has been known to say. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." That which is in our hearts, lives in our lives. If we know and love God, we shall remember him on Saturday as on the Sabbath-day; in our down-sitting or uprising; at work, and at home. Shop and market will be to us the same as church, chapel, or closet. We shall never go where we cannot ask God to think upon us for good.

Or you say, "I try to remember, but I am always forgetting." Ah! that tells a tale, does it not? Do you forget the things of this life,—your

dress or your dinner, your plans or your prospects? Do you forget the days when you were young,—your early home, and those you used to love and know? No; it is only GOD whom you always forget. Yes, and it always will be so, as long as it is only *you* that try, not the Holy Spirit that *brings to your remembrance*. (John xiv. 26.) For here is the cure. You must get the Holy Spirit, whom God has promised to all who ask him. You must be made a new man, and then you will get the new man's memory. Henceforth you will remember what you used to forget, and forget what you used to remember. Just as Paul forgot the things behind him, that he might press toward the mark. (Phil. iii. 13.) Just as Peter remembered Christ's word when he felt Christ's look, and went out and wept bitterly. (Matt. xxvi. 75.) The Holy Spirit will make you remember such things about yourself—your sin and God's mercy—that you will not be able to hold up your head. (Ezek. xvi. 63.) And he will make you remember such things of the Lord's long-suffering and loving-kindness,—how for these thirty, or forty, or it may be twice forty, years he has led you, and fed you, and kept you, (Deut. viii. 2,)—that your heart will be lifted up to trust and praise his name. You will cry to him to keep on remembering, as he has remembered. He has bid you do so. "Put me in remembrance," he says. Not that he needs reminding,—but we do. Not because he would ever forget,—but he knows how we might. And what is it we

are to put him in remembrance of? This wondrous promise, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will *not remember thy sins*." (Isa. xliii. 25.)

But do you want words to go and plead with God, as he tells you? The Psalms will help you. They cry for God's remembrance. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies. (Ps. xxv. 6.) Remember not, O Lord, the sins of my youth. According to thy mercy remember thou me. (Ps. xxv. 7.) And the Lord will remember the word on which he has caused us to hope. (Ps. cxix. 49.) He will remember us with the favour which he bears unto his own. (Ps. cvi. 4.) And we shall remember him,—his name, (Isa. xxvi. 8,) his holiness, (Ps. xcvi. 12,) once against us, now for us; his law (Ps. cxix. 97,) and his love, (Song i. 4;) by night as by day we shall remember him. (Ps. lxxiii. 6.)

Friend, do you live thus remembering and remembered by the Lord, day by day? Or are you saying, "The Lord hath forgotten; he will never see"? (Ps. x. 11.) Remember, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that *forget* God." (Ps. ix. 17.) "Wherefore *consider*, ye that forget." (Ps. l. 22.)

"But the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." (Ps. cxii. 6.) For "the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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SHALL YOU BE SAVED?

“Are there few that be saved?”—LUKE xiii. 23.



READER,—Young man or maiden, old men or children, married or single, gentle or simple, listen to a solemn question: **SHALL YOU BE SAVED?**

Reader, I take it for granted that you call yourself a Christian. You would not like to be reckoned a deist or an infidel. You profess to believe

the Bible, and all that it contains. The birth of Christ the Saviour—the death of Christ the Saviour—the salvation provided by Christ the Saviour,—all these are facts which you have probably never doubted. But, after all, will they profit you anything? Will they do you any good? In one word,—*Shall you be saved?*

It may be you are young, healthy, and strong. Perhaps you never had a day's illness in your life. Yet remember death sometimes cuts off the young in the flower of their days. Yet a little while, and you may be lying in a narrow, silent home. And then, consider,—*Shall you be saved?*

It may be you are rich and prosperous in this world. You have money, and all that money can command. But remember, riches are not for ever. You cannot keep them longer than a few years. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment. And then, consider,—*Shall you be saved?*

It may be you are poor and needy. You have scarcely enough to provide food and raiment for yourself and family. But you take comfort in the thought that there is a world to come, where poverty and want shall be unknown. But consider a moment,—*Shall you be saved?*

It may be you have a weak and sickly body. You hardly know what it is to be free from pain. There are days when you are tempted by very weariness to cry out with Jonah, "It is better to die than to live." But remember, death is not all. There is something else beyond the grave. And then, consider,—*Shall you be saved?*

Reader, I entreat you in all affection to examine the question I put before you. I address you as a dying creature,—an immortal creature,—a creature going to be judged before the bar of God: *Shall you be saved?*

I. *First, let me explain what it is to be saved.*

To be saved is not merely to profess and call yourself a Christian. You may have all the outward parts of Christianity, and yet be lost after all. You may be baptized into Christ's church,—go to Christ's table,—have Christian knowledge,—be reckoned a Christian man,—and yet

be a dead soul all your days, and at last be found on Christ's left hand. No, Reader, that is not salvation! Salvation is something far higher and deeper than this.

To be saved is to be delivered in this present life from *the guilt of sin*, by faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour. It is to be pardoned, justified, and freed from every charge of sin, by faith in Christ's blood and mediation. Whosoever with his heart believes on the Lord Jesus is a saved soul. He shall not perish. He shall have eternal life. This is the first part of salvation, and the root of all the rest. But this is not all.

To be saved is to be delivered in this present life from *the power of sin*, by being born again, and sanctified by Christ's Spirit. It is to be freed from the hateful dominion of sin, the world, and the devil, by having a new nature put in us by the Holy Ghost. Whosoever is thus renewed in the spirit of his mind, and converted, is a saved soul. He shall not perish. He shall enter into the kingdom of God. This is a second part of salvation. But this is not all.

To be saved is to be delivered in the day of judgment from all *the awful consequences of sin*. It is to be declared blameless, spotless, faultless, and complete in Christ, while others are found guilty, and condemned for ever. It is to hear those comfortable words,—“Come, ye blessed!” while others are hearing those fearful words,—“Depart, ye cursed!” It is to be owned and confessed by Christ as one of his dear children and servants, while others are disowned and cast off for ever.

Such is salvation. It is to be saved from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin. It is to believe and be sanctified now, and to be delivered from the wrath of God in the last day. He that has the first part in the life that now is, shall undoubtedly have the second part in the life to

come. Both parts of it hang together. Let none dream he shall ever be saved at last, if he is not born again first. Let none doubt, if he is born again here, that he shall assuredly be saved hereafter.

Reader, take notice that the grand object of having a religion is *to be saved*. This is the great question that you have to settle with your conscience, and to which I want you to attend. The matter is not whether you go to church or chapel,—whether you go through certain forms and ceremonies,—whether you perform a certain number of religious duties. The matter is whether, after all, you will be saved. Without this, all your religious doings are weariness and labour in vain.

Never, never be content with anything short of a saving religion. Surely to have a religion which neither gives peace in life, nor hope in death, nor glory in the world to come, is childish folly.

And now, Reader, you have heard what salvation is. Consider calmly my question, “SHALL YOU BE SAVED?”

II. Let me, in the second place, *point out the mistakes which are common in the world about the number of the saved.*

What, then, do men generally think about the spiritual state of others *while they are alive*? What do they think of the souls of their relations, and friends, and neighbours, and acquaintances? Let us just see how that question can be answered.

They know that all around them are going to die, and to be judged. They know that they have all souls to be lost or saved. And what, to all appearance, do they consider their end as likely to be?

Will they allow that *anybody* is wicked or ungodly? Never, hardly, whatever may be his way of life. He may be a breaker of the Sabbath.

He may be a neglecter of the Bible. He may be utterly without evidences of true religion. No matter! His friends will often tell you that he may not make so much profession as some, but that he has a “good heart” at the bottom, and is not a wicked man. I ask any one who knows the world, as in God’s sight, Is it not so?

And what does all this prove? It proves that men flatter themselves there is no great difficulty in getting to heaven. It proves, plainly that men are of opinion that most persons will be saved.

But what do men generally think about the spiritual state of others *after they are dead*? Let us just see how this question can be answered.

Men allow, if they are not infidels, that all who die have gone to a state of happiness, or of misery. And to which of these two states do they seem to think the greater part of persons go when they leave this world?

I say, without fear of contradiction, that there is an unhappily common fashion of speaking well of the condition of those who have departed. It matters little, apparently, how a man has lived. He may have given no signs of repentance, or faith in Christ. He may have lived and died like a creature without a soul. And yet, as soon as this man is dead, people will tell you complacently they “hope he is gone to a better world.” They will speak of his death afterwards as “a blessed change for him.” I have no wish to hurt any one’s feelings. I only ask any one who knows the world, Is it not all true?

But again, what do men generally think of ministers who preach fully the doctrines of the New Testament? Let us just see how this question can be answered.

Send a man into a parish who shall declare all the counsel of God, and keep back nothing that is profitable. Let him be one who shall clearly proclaim justification by faith, re-

generation by the Spirit, and holiness of life. Let him be one who shall draw the line distinctly between the converted and the unconverted, and give both to sinners and to saints their portion. Let him produce out of the New Testament a plain, unanswerable, unmistakeable description of the true Christian's character. Let him show that no man who does not possess that character can have any reasonable hope of being saved. Let him press that description closely on the consciences of his hearers, and urge upon them repeatedly that every soul who dies without that character will be lost. Let him do this ably and affectionately, and, after all, what will the result be?

The result will be that, while some repent and are saved, the great majority of his hearers will not receive and believe his doctrine. They may not oppose him publicly. They may even esteem him, and respect him as an earnest, sincere, kind-hearted man; but they will go no farther. He may show them the express words of Christ and his apostles. He may quote text upon text, and passage upon passage; it will be to no purpose. The great majority of his hearers will think him "too strict," and "too close," and "too particular." They will say among themselves, that the world is not so bad as the minister seems to think, and that people cannot be so good as the minister wants them to be; and that, after all, they hope they shall be all right at the last. Are not these things so?

And what does it all prove? It just makes one more proof that men generally are resolved to think that salvation is not a very hard business, and that after all most people will be saved.

But *what solid reason can men show us for these common opinions?* They have none—literally none at all. They have not a text of Scripture, which, fairly interpreted, supports their views. They speak smooth things about one another's spiritual state, *just because they do not like to allow there is danger.* They cry "Peace, peace," over one another's graves, because they want it to be so.

Take notice, Reader, that the world's opinion is worth nothing in matters of religion. About the price of an ox or a horse, or the value of labour,—about wages and work,—about money and corn,—about all such things the men of the world may give a correct opinion. But beware, if you love life, of being guided by man's judgment in the things that concern salvation. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

And now, Reader, I press my question once more on your attention: **SHALL YOU BE SAVED?**

What a man needs to get to heaven is an actual personal interest in Christ's salvation. Surely, if you are not saved, it will be better at last never to have been born.

Rev. Canon Ryle.

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DR. ALEXANDER DUFF,
MISSIONARY TO THE HEATHEN.



IN a Perthshire farmhouse, on the 25th April 1806, was born ALEXANDER DUFF, "the prince of Indian missionaries." His boyhood was passed under the shadow of the Grampian Hills, in the Vale of Athole. He never forgot his early home, nor the parents to whom he owed so much.

His father was no common man. He had gifts of nature, quickened by grace in a revival of religion in 1796. At that time the parish minister, Mr. Stewart, was preaching sermons full of mind and matter, but lacking the one thing, the Spirit of life and power. None knew this better than himself. Bending over the pulpit

one day, he confessed to his people his "great ignorance and blindness," and asked them to join him in prayer for light. The prayer was soon answered. Mr. Simeon, a godly English clergyman, was detained on his travels by the fast-day before the communion. Eighty years ago no work was done, no hiring for post or pleasure was thought of, on such a day. The stranger preached for Mr. Stewart, and that sermon was made of God the ray of heavenly light to the minister and his people. Henceforth, in fulness and power, he preached God in Christ reconciling a guilty world unto himself. And under this ministry Dr. Duff's father lived, and grew in knowledge and in faith,—a seeker of other souls.

By his own fireside, that father often spoke of the martyrs of the past, and of the state of the heathen now, thus kindling in his son's heart the desire to become a witness for Christ, a winner of souls for him. Other influences were also at work. A dream, of the great white throne and the judgment-day, threw him into terror as to his own soul, and sent him to his knees for peace and pardon. Another time he dreamt of a heavenly chariot, and heard a voice saying, "Come up hither; I have work for thee to do." A special deliverance also marked this time. Returning home one night by a short cut, he and a companion found themselves lost among the snow-drifts on the hills. Night wore on, the cold was killing, and strength nearly gone, when the flash of a salmon-poacher's light guided them to safety.

In these and other ways the lad heard God's call, and marked his care. At St. Andrews College, under Dr. Chalmers, the desire to rescue the perishing, to preach Christ among the heathen, grew with his growth.

"There was a downright earnestness about him which everybody felt," says one of his companions at

this time. He had got an aim in life,—Christ to live for, his cause to work for,—and to this he gave himself, body, soul, and spirit. So, when a letter calling for help for India reached him, his answer was at once, "Here am I, send me." That great country was already lying heavy on his heart. He knew how for upwards of 200 years it had been in the hands of Englishmen who had lived for their own riches and renown, with scarce a thought for the 130 millions of souls in their charge. These millions were sunk in all the darkness and misery of idolatry and devil-worship, and their lives were full of foul and cruel practices. A handful of devoted men, indeed, laboured among them, but at this time their faith and hope were well-nigh dead.

Thinking upon these things, Alexander Duff was not the man to hang back. Once while preaching, before setting out, he thus broke forth: "There was a time when I had no care or concern for the heathen. That was a time when I had no care or concern for my own soul. When, by the grace of God, I was led to care for my own soul, then it was I began to care for the heathen abroad. In my closet, on my bended knees, I then said to God, 'O Lord, thou knowest that silver and gold to give to this cause I have none. What I have, I give to thee. I offer thee myself. Wilt thou accept the gift?'"

Thus given to God, and welcomed of the church, Dr. Duff and his young wife, in October 1829, set sail for the land where henceforth he was to spend and to be spent for his Master. But, like St. Paul of old, the minister of God was to be approved in afflictions and distresses before his work began.

In his first voyage, terrible storms and long delays were followed by shipwreck near the Cape of Good Hope. Mercifully no lives were lost. But nothing else was saved, except

the missionary's Bible and Psalm-book. But from that lone island, with no food but wild birds' eggs, the song of praise went up to God in the words of the 107th Psalm. Later on, close to the Indian shore, and under a blazing Indian sun, another storm caused another shipwreck. Carried through the waves, and landed in an idol temple,—such was the missionary's first foot-hold on the great country to which he was carrying the glorious gospel of Christ.

Beginning at Calcutta, the chief city of Bengal, he founded a school or college for the Hindoos, in which not only English should be taught, but the word of God should be made the foundation of all. His only earthly helpers at first were a native gentleman of high position, and a poor unlearned English watchmaker. But the Lord stood by him to strengthen him. He was content to sow and to strive in faith. At first the natives were so afraid of their children being made Christians, that the school began with only five pupils. From the first day, it was opened with prayer, and a part of the Bible, such as "the Prodigal Son," was read. It did not take long for the word of God to strike home. "Oh, sir, this is too good for us!—who can act up to this?" was the cry of one. "Can I be saved?" exclaimed another.

From the first five, the numbers increased rapidly to 500. The missionary lived among those for whom he laboured. Ups and downs there were many, but the truth made way, and this in spite of trouble coming on the taught as well as on the teacher. The Hindoo religion forbids the eating of beef. Some of the scholars, seeing this to be foolish, not only ate beef themselves, but threw some into the courtyard of a strict high-caste Hindoo. The city was in an uproar; the idol worshippers turned the ringleader out from his own people for ever. No longer an

idolator, yet not a Christian, the homeless and unhappy young man was led to go on. At last he got peace in Christ. Two brothers—one, like Andrew of old, leading the other—came forward to declare themselves on the Lord's side. One of these was baptized, making confession how it was "in spite of himself" he had laid hold of Christ; so pierced had his heart been by a sense of sin, and by a sight of his grace and truth. "Surely," he exclaimed, "this must have been what the Bible calls 'grace, free grace, sovereign grace!'"

Another, when even a mother's piteous cries were joined to entreaties and abuse, forsook all to follow Jesus even unto death. Slowly but surely a band of true and faithful Christians was gathered in, many of whom were to seal their testimony with their blood in the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, others of whom are still living to preach Christ among their heathen brethren. But besides these servants of God, who can count those who were brought under Christian teaching, and renounced their idols? Women, too, hitherto neglected and degraded, were cared for. Yet Dr. Duff found time to undertake the charge of a congregation of his own countrymen. Faithfully he re-proved and taught them. Wherever he went,—into the Governor's palace, or the lowest hovel,—Dr. Duff carried his colours with him. Of Christ or of his cross he was never ashamed.

But these labours, ably as he was helped in them, told even on his iron frame. He broke down so utterly, that he was in a state of unconsciousness when, in 1835, he was carried on board ship for his native land. There, instead of resting, he found new work to do, stirring up those at home to give themselves, their money, and their prayers to the cause of the gospel in India.

For two several periods after this, —once for eleven, once for five years,

—he laboured on in India, joyfully throwing himself into the work which, in cloud and in sunshine, the Lord had so prospered. During the last time, he passed with his beloved converts through the horrors of the Mutiny. The number of professing native Christians was believed to be then about 150,000. Out of these, while some faltered, and many followed afar off, there was a glorious roll-call of saints and martyrs for Christ. Never had the light shone so brightly as in that hour of darkness and horrid cruelty.

By this time Dr. Duff's wise counsels and influence had become a power in India, which even statesmen had learned to regard and to value. But it now became plain that if his life was to be prolonged, he must leave the land where he had so long laboured. Shattered in body, but still strong in spirit, he finally returned to Scotland in 1864. In this altered sphere he ceased not to go on, spending and being spent for Christ. Besides becoming president of the Free Church Foreign Missions Committee, he was now made Professor of Evangelistic Theology in the New College, Edinburgh. But while thus labouring, often far beyond his strength, he refused, with characteristic unselfishness, to accept of the salary which pertained to the office. He insisted that it should be wholly given to the cause of missions among the heathen.

But the brave struggle, through those years of increasing infirmity, was drawing to a close. At Sidmouth, Devonshire, on Tuesday, 12th February 1878, he "fell asleep."

Among his last words, in response to the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," he whispered, with his dying breath, "*Unspeakable!*"

It has been well said, that on Dr. Duff's funeral day that grave in the Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh, closed over one of the noblest of the sons of men. In that tall and manly form there dwelt, with a fiery ardour and strength of purpose, a grand breadth and bigness of nature, guided and sanctified by the abounding grace of God. With a soldier-like devotedness, personal toil or inconvenience, or even risk, if it were in the cause of his Master, never seemed to cost him a thought. Yet while "the heathen for Christ" seemed ever as "a fire within his bones," that consuming zeal for others did not deaden the warmth of his affection in all his personal and domestic relations. Courteous, gentle, sympathizing, he was a man not only to be liked, but to be loved.

But though Dr. Duff is gone, God's work continues. And as in India others are permitted to carry on what he began, so to us, too, he, being dead, yet speaketh. For it was no mere change of creed or amendment of life for which he laboured. It was to see the new man in Christ Jesus formed within.

His life asks us,—Are *we* living or dead? If living, are we labouring for Christ? If we cannot labour, are we letting our light shine for Him? Or are we going on, month by month, and year by year, with no concern for our own souls, and therefore no concern for the souls of others?

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THE TWO TEACHERS: WHICH AM I OBEYING?

BY THE LATE BROWNLOW NORTH.



See page 3.

I BELIEVE the effect of honest, faithful gospel preaching has always been the same—namely, that those who heard it were “cut to the heart.”

This cutting of the heart operated in two different ways. We find it was so in the time of the apostles. In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, on the great day of the out-

pouring of the Holy Ghost, when Peter preached to the people that they had been the betrayers and the murderers of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were pricked to the heart, and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” This is one of the effects that more or less invariably follows honest, faithful gospel preaching. But when

Peter again preached the same gospel in this place, and when Stephen preached the same gospel in another place, (Acts vii.,) and the congregations to whom they preached were, like those upon the day of Pentecost, pricked in their hearts, or, as it is here, "cut to the heart," instead of crying out, "What shall we do to be saved?" in the one place they took counsel together to slay the preachers, and in the other they "gnashed on him with their teeth."

Where a man is addressing himself to men and women of whom he fears many amongst them may be at present unconverted, if he is honest, and faithful, and true, I believe that one or the other of these effects will follow,—either that under his preaching they will be brought to cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?"—or they will go away gnashing on him in their hearts, and saying, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not good that such a man should live." I pray God the Holy Ghost that such may be the effect of my preaching.

I pray God that there may not be one amongst you who shall be able to go away unmoved from what you now hear, unless you are already in Christ Jesus. My desire is to bring you, if God will enable you, to consider your latter end; and "what will it profit you if you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?" Nothing! nothing!

What would the man who died yesterday, and who had listened to the preaching of pardon for his sins, and salvation by Jesus Christ, from the time he was a child unto the time when he died, and went out of this world unsaved and unconverted,—what would he give now to be back once more where you are, to hear that God has exalted Jesus Christ "to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins"? And as it is now being said of some, "He died yesterday," so, dear brother,—so, dear sister,—it will some

day be said of you. It will be said, "He died yesterday;" "She died yesterday." How often have you said it of a friend, and of a neighbour, and of a relation! and in a little time from now, your friends, your neighbours, your relations, will be saying it of you. Oh, if they were saying it of you now,—if you *had* died yesterday,—I ask you, dear friends, where do you believe you would now be lifting up your eyes? Do you believe it would be in that place where no hope and no mercy can ever enter? or do you believe it would be where they praise God day and night without ceasing, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for he hath redeemed us and washed us from our sins in his own blood"? I beseech you, ask yourself; no, I beseech you, ask your Bible; I beseech you for one moment to remember what you know of the teachings of the Bible, of the description that is given in the Bible of those who are saved, and those who are not saved, and then, comparing yourself with the written word of God, to answer now the question, "*Where should I be if it was being said of me now, that I died yesterday?*"

There are but two teachers in the whole world,—God, and Man,—the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. The spirit of man has many names. I may call him the spirit of evil, for that is as truly his name as the spirit of man; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. The god of this world, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—these are the only two Teachers upon the face of this earth, and it is absolutely impossible for any human being to follow both these Teachers. Every man living is following either one or other of them. He is either following the teaching of his own spirit, the spirit of man, or he is following the teaching of God's Spirit. And whether a man will believe his own heart,—or will believe God, and

the teaching of God's Spirit,—this is the great controversy.

Now you will all no doubt say, "Surely we ought to believe God, we ought to believe God rather than man, and I am willing to obey God rather than man." But when you say so, I think it is very likely that many of you are leaving out of your catalogue the very man of all others whom it is most absolutely necessary for you not to obey. When you say you will not obey man, when you say you will not fear man rather than God, do you include, in the list of men, that bad man *yourself*? Believe me, friends, the greatest enemy, the greatest false teacher, he who of all others is the most anxious to deceive us, and ultimately to destroy us, is the spirit that we have in our own hearts, the spirit we are born with into the world; and this is the man of all others that we must learn *not* to believe, that we must learn not to fear, that we must learn not to obey. God tells us about this spirit, "desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things." I think the prayer of the poor negro might be greatly blessed to many of us, if we would pray the same, with the same desire as he prayed it. A negro, who had been converted, was overheard by his missionary praying, "O God, save me from all my enemies, especially out of the hand of that bad man, my own self." Now, dear friends, if you would obey God, if you would believe God, if you would follow Jesus Christ, you must make up your mind from this very moment that *you cannot also believe self*, that you cannot obey self, that you cannot follow your own self, and your own inclinations.

"We ought to obey God rather than man." Are you prepared for that? Up to this moment, *have you been doing it*, through the past of your life? If you have, you are amongst Jesus' sheep; for Jesus says of his sheep, that they hear his voice, and that he knows them, and that they follow him. That

is the mark of his sheep, that they follow Jesus, that they are led by his Spirit. But if there are those here who have not that mark,—who, with all their profession of Christianity, are obliged to acknowledge that they have not had God for their teacher, that it is not Christ that they have been altogether following, but that it is the teaching, and the wisdom, and the desires of *their own hearts*,—then, oh! let me ask you this question,—If this should be the day that God should call you to judgment, what have been the consequences to you of following the teaching of your own heart? Whither has it led you? what will be your end?

Dear brother or sister, what if you should die this day, having been led by that teaching of your own heart? That heart told you, when first you heard of Jesus, that his was a gloomy service, a miserable service; that you would lose all your happiness, and all your pleasure, and all your amusement, and all those many things that the natural heart of man so desires; and that, if you would only follow its teaching, it would give you pleasure, profit, enjoyment, it would give you this thing and the other, that your soul lusted after. And *you believed your heart*, and you followed your heart; and *you did not believe Jesus*, and you did not follow Jesus. And you come now to your sickbed, you come to your deathbed; and though the world had given you all that it promised you, though it had never disappointed you (but I doubt that), even assuming that it has done all for you that it can possibly do for you, *what does it profit you* if the next hour is to be to you the hour of judgment?

Ask yourselves, dear friends,—you who have followed your own hearts,—haven't you been cheated? haven't you been deceived? And would it not have been far better for you to have been obeying Christ, who hath bought you with his own blood to glorify God? Has not obeying man rather than God

brought you to this position, that if you are called to appear before God, though you may have all the riches of this world, you are poor, and wretched, and needy, and lost, and miserable?

Is it to go on? Shall it go on? How long are you to continue in this position? It once looked very long to you before you would be as old as you are to-day, but it has come. This particular moment of time has come, and you are as old to-day as you are, though you once thought it looked so far off. And so the particular time will come, though it look ever so far off, in which you will die; yea, the very particular moment of time will come *when you will have been your first five minutes in heaven, or your first five minutes in hell.* Do you mean to go on following your own heart? Do you mean to go on obeying man? Do you? Tell God; don't tell me. It is God who asks you, not I. Why didn't you die yesterday? Do you know as much of your Bible as enables you to give a Bible answer to the question why you did not die yesterday? Because God is long-suffering to you, because he is not willing that any one of you should perish, but would rather that you should come to repentance. That is the reason. In spite of all your ingratitude, in spite of all your coldness, in spite of all your trampling upon his blood, in spite of your being, as truly as the Jews were, the betrayer and the murderer of the Lord Jesus, when the accuser of the brethren has accused you before the throne, One has stood there and said, "Not this year, Father; not this day, Father; wait till I dig about him a little more; wait till I try him

once again; oh, cut him not down to-day; keep him here till to-morrow; peradventure he will repent."

Oh, dear friends, consider that the history of Jesus of Nazareth is *real*, is actual, is positive; that for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; that when the way was as much barred up for the return of God to man, as was the way of man's return to God, that then Jesus Christ came into the very midst of sin, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and through the rent veil of his flesh made a way by which not only we might be turned to God, but God might come back to the sinner; and there he stands, yet exclaiming, "I am the door." He cries, "I am the door; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? I am the way; you cannot come to the Father but by me; but by me you can; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

This has been sounding in your ears since the time you were little children until this hour; and yet perhaps up to this moment you are obeying man rather than God, following your own hearts rather than Jesus Christ, who would lead you to God. But in spite of all you have done, in spite of all your ingratitude, in spite of all your hardness, your coldness, your evil, only evil and that continually, towards him,—he comes again to you to-day; he makes you a free offer of pardon and of his salvation, and says, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" If you refuse to-day, it may be the last time you may ever get the call.

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SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT SOCIETY.

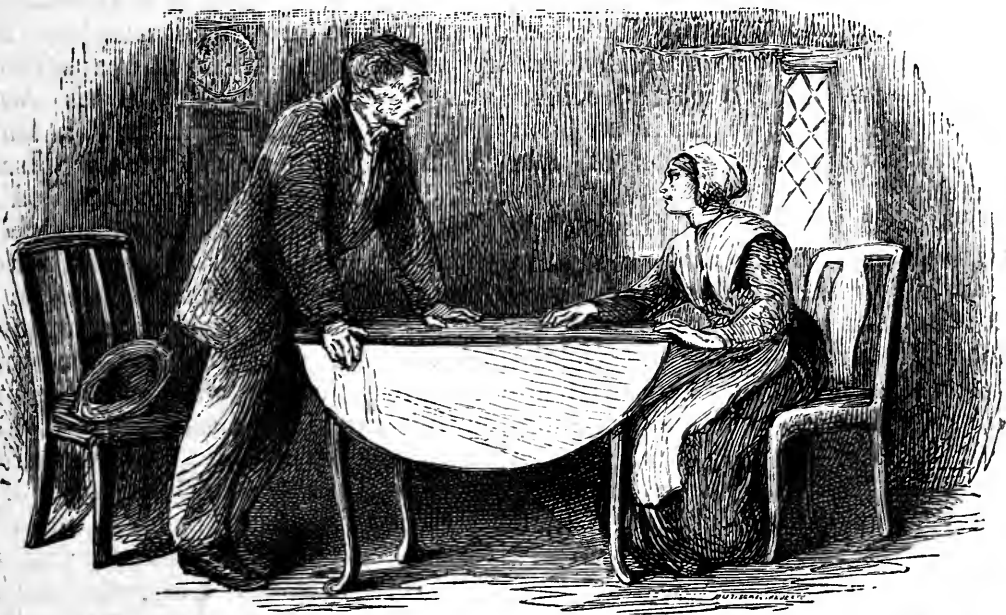
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JULY 1880.

DAYS OF CHOLERA IN SCOTLAND.



See page 3.

ASIATIC cholera first appeared in this country in the year 1832. Its approach from the East had been long watched with anxiety. The actual visit was met in consternation. Every symptom of the disease, which proved so rapidly fatal, occasioned alarm ; and not a few who had been careless and godless were roused, by the frequent deaths all around of friends and neighbours, to think of their own danger, and of their unfitness to appear before God. Some who had turned a deaf ear to the voice of counsel and warning, and who had run on in the paths of folly with hearts hardened against God, were now glad to hear the gospel invitation, and to listen to the offer of mercy.

John Pearson was a plain Christian man, who liked to speak of his Saviour. But that which filled him with joy and inspired him with love to souls met with no response in the hearts of his thoughtless neighbours, until God came nigh in judgment. Then he found ears open which had hitherto been closed, and hearts failing for fear, which aforetime had rejoiced in wickedness. By occupation a weaver, he lived in a country village, and had been sent for to visit one who had discovered that he had a soul, and that it was unsaved. He was intercepted on his way by a request to visit a man dying of cholera. The patient was entering the stage of *collapse*, and was past all consciousness. John prayed with the family, asking, in few sentences, God's grace and blessing for them, and urging them, individually, and *now*, to seek the Saviour, "seeing," he added, "that in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

He went on to Peter Wilson's, the man who had sent for him. He found him full of anxiety, and really ill, though, as it proved, the disease was not of the dreaded type, and yielded to remedies. But now he was trembling, for fear of death and the judgment-seat of the holy God. "You want to hear about the Saviour, Peter?" said the visitor. "Oh, if there was a Saviour for me!" "There is a Saviour for you. God says, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.' And the Lord Jesus Christ said, with his own lips, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" "Oh, man," said Peter, "I've been an awful sinner!" "Ay," John replied, "but 'Christ came to seek and to save that which was *lost*.'" (Luke xix. 10.) "Ye dinna ken what a' I've dune; I hardly ken mysel'." "That may be all true," was the answer, "but it was just your

kind that Christ came to save. He said: 'I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance.' It's just sinners, and no other, that he *can* save." "Ah! but I'm waur than the lave." "Not too bad for him, Peter. 'He is able to save them *to the uttermost* that come unto God by him.' (Heb. vii. 25.) Do you wish Christ to save you?" "Ay, if that be possible." "Surely you do not doubt that *He* is able?" and John read from his Bible the verse he had just quoted, and the account which Matthew gives, (chap. ix. 10-13,) of Jesus in his house eating with publicans and sinners, when he answered the Pharisee: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "Re—pen—tance?" was Peter's echo. "Yes, to repentance. You wish to know what that is? It is just fleeing to Christ to escape from sin. 'HE bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' (1 Pet. ii. 24;) and 'with *his* stripes we are healed.' (Isa. liii. 5.) If the knowledge that God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered thus for sin, leads you to hate the sin, and trust him to save and deliver you from it, that is repentance. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'" (Isa. liii. 5.) "And am I to believe that?" Peter continued. "Certainly; it is the word of God, who cannot lie. The Son of man, (as Christ calls himself,) was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.) "It's queer," he replied, "that Christ loves *sinners*." "It was just his love to sinners that brought him to this world to die for them; and now he is risen again, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, (Acts v. 31;) and therefore we pray and confess our sins to him, who is God, equal with

the Father." And together they approached the mercy-seat, pouring out their hearts before God, "who remembered us in our low estate, for his MERCY endureth for ever."

In yet another cottage, which Pearson was asked to enter, he found a woman impressed by a sense of the uncertainty of time, saddened by thinking of the frequent deaths in the village, and herself afraid to die. He spoke to her of One who could remove the sting from death, and dwelt on the fact that *sin* is the sting of death, wishing her to see that sin was the cause both of her fear and her danger. (1 Cor. xv. 56.) But she was displeased at being so spoken to, as if she were counted no better than more heinous offenders. She said, "I may be a sinner, for I've no aye been to the kirk as often as I micht ha'e been, and I don't seek to deny that I havena read the Bible as I should ha'e dune, but I've ne'er been an ill-doer like some in this raw." "Perhaps," was John's answer, "you might have been regularly in church, and constantly reading the Bible on Sabbaths and at other times, and have been an unpardoned sinner still." "An' what am I to do, then?" "If you pray God to show you your own heart, that you may see the sin that is there, and if he hears your prayer, you will not then be likely to think yourself better than others." He then asked her to turn to Luke's Gospel, chap. xviii. ver. 9. She got a Bible, which she handed to her visitor, saying, "You will read it yoursel', sir." He read to her the parable, that Jesus spake to some "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others," and a few verses at the beginning of the 13th chapter of Luke, and then prayed for her that she might be brought to see and know what sin is, and find Christ to be a Saviour suitable to her.

John now called on his friend and fellow-Christian, Widow Watson.

He found her propped up with pillows; the Bible, her constant companion, at her elbow, and Baxter's *Saint's Rest* open before her. "You revel in good things here, Elspeth," was his salutation. "Ou ay, John, I canna say I mourn an absent Lord, for the Lord's with me; but I'm waitin' for his call, and just wonder it's so lang comin'." "He has use for you here yet. Your neighbours all know what your experience of God is." "The Lord is my portion." "Death has lost its terror to you, Elspeth." "Thanks be to God," was her reply, "who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. But oh! death is weel named the king of terrors to the wicked." Her friend told her of the visits he had just made, and they unitedly besought God to bless to Peter Wilson (whose heart the Lord had opened) the truth of his word which had been put before him, and that he might, as a new-born babe, "desire the sincere milk of the word, that he might grow thereby." (1 Pet. ii. 2.) They prayed that the Holy Spirit might enlighten the mind of the other, as to sin, and the Deliverer from it; and that all her neighbours might be led to seek and find Christ to be the Saviour they needed.

Before leaving the row, Pearson again looked in on Peter. He found that the effect of the conversation had been to soothe the sufferer, and lead his thoughts from himself to Jesus, the sinner's friend. John put marks to a few passages of Scripture for him to have read to him as opportunity might offer: Isa. liii.; Ps. xxxii. and li.; Luke xv.; the short narrative at the close of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th chapters of Luke; John iii.; Matt. ix.; and the Gospel narratives of our Lord's last sufferings, resurrection, and ascension.

At Peter's desire, John Pearson procured for him a New Testament

in a good-sized type, suitable for one whose reading cost him some effort. This Peter used with great diligence, spelling out page after page with increasing ease, and with growing wonder and delight. While he was recovering, he sat beside Mrs. Watson, reading his Testament with her, getting the benefit of her knowledge and experience, and, in a sympathizing companion, having the joy almost doubled which the entrance of God's truth had brought to his mind.

Peter continued to live in the same cottage as before, worked in the same mine, and along with the same mates. But he now lived in a new world, for he was himself a new man. He had been reconciled to God, and all was new. Formerly the Sabbath was to him, as to his fellow-workmen generally, just one of the "off days" which every week brought round. It was the day most generally chosen for cock-fights, held at an appointed place, more or less distant as suiting the convenience of one or another of the mining villages. After a sitting in the public-house, Peter might have been seen carrying home, under his coat, his torn, bleeding bird, to be nursed for another fight. He kept game-cocks no longer; but he did not become a monk. He did not shun his former acquaintances, though he refused to follow in their ways. He could throw a quoit with any man, and he rather liked to prove his skill; but he was no longer asked to the "matches," or to enter a public-house, for they knew there was no use asking him to "bet," and he would neither treat

nor be treated. He had entered Christ's school, and was learning of him; not now serving a hard master, but one whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light. (Matt. xi. 30.)

Peter Wilson had now found a Saviour who had delivered him from sin, and this had made him a happy man. Now he had the Bible, and it was "the word of God." Now he had a Sabbath, and it was "the Lord's day." Now he had the sanctuary, and it was "the house of God." Now, in the holy exercise of prayer, he approached "the mercy-seat," and it was "the gate of heaven." To himself, and to all around him, who knew what he had been, and what he was now, his life gave witness that the word was true, "Him that cometh TO ME, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

Thus was the believing service of John Pearson, a humble hand-loom weaver, accepted by his Lord and Master. "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (Jas. v. 20.)

Reader! have *you* ever known, with John Pearson, the strange new joy of having been the means of winning a soul to Christ? Or do you rather find your own likeness in Peter Wilson's first experiences, or in the woman who "trusted in herself that she was righteous?" Let your past life, your present state, be what they may, it is as true NOW,—as true *for you*,—as it ever was, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1880.

GOPI NATH NUNDI.

A STORY OF THE MUTINY IN INDIA.



See page 3.

GOPI NATH NUNDI was one of the earliest converts of Dr. Duff's mission in India, having been baptized by him at Calcutta in 1832. He was for some years thereafter an ordained minister in connection with the Old School American Presbyterian Church. A year or two after his baptism, he had gone to the north-west to take charge of a Christian school between Allah-

abad and Cawnpore, whence he afterwards returned to his old station of Futtehpore. There he laboured alone; and through God's blessing, a native church, numbering several scores, was gathered by his means from among the heathen.

In May 1857, after the terrible massacres at Meerut and Delhi, panic spread like lightning. On the

24th of that month, the magistrate of Futtehpore advised all European ladies, and native Christian females, to leave the station for Allahabad. Gopi Nath proceeded with his wife and family, together with the wives and children of the native converts, to that city. On reaching Allahabad, however, he found that things there looked just as ill as at Futtehpore.

After five or six hours of dreadful suspense, they resolved, before the dawn of next day, to attempt to cross the Jumna, and proceed by land to Mirzapore, distant about sixty miles. They set off on foot for Mirzapore. The fugitive party consisted of Gopi Nath and his wife, two boys, and an infant at the breast. After they had walked a few miles, their blistered feet refused to carry them any farther, and they sank down fainting. "Then," says Gopi Nath, "when in an awful perplexity, not knowing what to do, we raised our hearts to him who is always ready to hear and grant the petitions of his believing people." Nor did they trust in vain. As they were praying, an empty cart came up that was returning that way; and the driver, for a reasonable sum, agreed at once to take them on a few miles. Having reached the distance bargained for, he dropped them in an open field, exposed to a meridian sun and the fiery hot winds. They were at once surrounded by the villagers, armed with sticks having lead twisted round one end, swords, and muskets. Again did they raise up their souls to their heavenly Father, and again did he interpose for their deliverance. The zemindar of the place, a Hindu, suddenly made his appearance, just in time. Gopi Nath at once confessed that he and his family were Christians, and that their trust was in the God of the Christians. The zemindar, fearing after-retribution, persuaded the rabble to let their prey escape uninjured.

About sunset they reached a village, distant only about twelve miles from Allahabad. From a conversation providentially overheard, they gathered that the purpose of a Brahmin, who had given them shelter, was to murder them while sleeping, and thus secure all they had to himself. In this diabolical purpose he was defeated by their keeping awake all night—praying aloud, and singing praises to their Father in heaven. While detained there, they witnessed the following. A Hindoo syce, (groom or horsekeeper,) returning from Cawnpore to his home at Mirzapore, with his wife and only child, about a year old, was arrested by the villagers. The syce himself they seized first, and soon plundered of everything. They then snatched the child from the mother's arms, and, holding it by the legs, dashed its brains out upon a stone!

Having passed another day and sleepless night, they proceeded on their perilous journey. But hardly had they reached the main road, when they were beset by armed ruffians. Gopi Nath simply and plainly told them that he was a Christian *padre* (minister)—that his vocation was to preach the gospel of salvation—that they might do with them as they thought proper, while they would submit in humble resignation to the will of God. He and his companions had been stripped; but the villains began to quarrel among themselves, and Gopi Nath, his wife, and children contrived to escape.

Finding that the road to Mirzapore was blocked up by hordes of ruthless robbers, they resolved to attempt to retrace their steps to Allahabad; and, after much suffering, they succeeded in reaching the Jumna. When crossing the river, they saw the mission-house already burnt to ashes—the beautiful church shattered and dismantled—with endless other tokens of havoc in every direction.

On landing, the Mussulmans, on learning that they were Christians, began to clamour for their lives. And killed, there and then, they inevitably would have been, had not a Hindoo goldsmith taken pity on them, and received them into his house. They were then brought before a Maulavi, or learned Mohammedan, who had in the name of the King of Delhi proclaimed himself acting ruler of Allahabad. On their way to the Maulavi, they were again and again on the point of being murdered.

When they reached him, he was seated, like a king, on a throne, surrounded by men with drawn swords. Then followed an interview, which is given as nearly as possible in Gopi Nath's own words :—

Maulavi—Who are you? *Gopi Nath*—We are Christians. *M.*—What place do you come from? *G.*—Futtehpore. *M.*—What was your occupation? *G.*—Preaching and teaching the Christian religion. *M.*—Are you a *padre*? *G.*—Yes, sir. *M.*—Was it you who used to go about reading and distributing books in streets and villages? *G.*—Yes, sir; it was I and my catechist. *M.*—How many Christians have you made? *G.*—I did not make any Christians, for no human being can change the heart of another; but God, through my instrumentality, brought to the belief and profession of *his* true religion some thirty or forty.

On this, the Maulavi lost his temper, and exclaimed in a great rage, “Fy, fy; shame, shame; this is downright blasphemy. God never makes Kaffirs” (meaning Christians); “but you Kaffirs pervert the people.”

M.—How many Mohammedans have you perverted to your religion? *G.*—I have not perverted any one; but, by the grace of God, about a dozen of Mohammedans have turned from darkness unto the glorious light of the gospel.

Hearing this, the Maulavi cried out in great wrath, “You are a rogue—a villain! You have renounced your forefathers’ faith, and have been using every effort to bring others into the same road of destruction. You deserve no ordinary punishment. Yours must be a cruel death. My sentence, therefore, is, that your nose, ears, and

hands be cut off at different times, so as to prolong your sufferings. Your wife must be dealt with in the same manner, and your children shall be taken into slavery.”

On this, Gopi Nath’s wife, with undaunted courage, was enabled to say to the Maulavi, “Since we are to die, the only favour I ask for is, that we be not separated in our death; and that, instead of torturing, you order us to be killed at once.”

This remark seemed to touch the heart of the tyrant. After a while, he broke out, exclaiming, “Praised be God! you appear to be a respectable man; I pity you and your family. As a friend, therefore, I advise you and them to become Mohammedans. By doing so, you will not only save your lives, but be raised to a high rank.” Gopi Nath answered that “they would rather die than give up their faith in Jesus Christ as the only true Saviour.”

After being evidently puzzled, his final sentence was this :—“Well, out of pity, I will allow you three days; during these days you may have proper help in studying the Koran. If you then believe, and become Mohammedans, all right and good. But if otherwise, your noses, ears, and hands must be cut off.” To which Gopi Nath replied, “It is all in vain: there is no occasion to wait so long; for while God is pleased to continue his grace to us, we will not renounce our faith.” The Maulavi made signs to take them off to prison.

On reaching the place of imprisonment, they were surprised and saddened to find already there several other native Christians, a British officer, and another English gentleman with his wife and five children.

Perceiving that Gopi Nath’s words cheered his fellow-captives, the wicked jailor separated him from his family and all the rest; then he and other rebels fell upon them with weapons—dragging Gopi Nath himself outside,

and fastening his feet in the stocks—and seizing his wife by her hair, knocking her head against a brick, and inflicting a wound on the forehead, the mark of which will cling to her through life.

The agonies of all now became unspeakably increased. Gopi Nath outside, with his feet fast in the stocks, was exposed without any shelter at all, bare-headed, to the blazing sun and hot winds.

At last, the third, the fatal day that was to seal their doom, arrived. But the Maulavi did not send for them. On the sixth day, however, the Maulavi himself came to them; and, looking at Gopi Nath, asked, with a leer, if he was comfortable? The reply was, "How can I be comfortable, thus exposed day and night, with my feet in the stocks? but I take it patiently, as such is the will of my heavenly Father." Again he strove to persuade them to renounce Christ. His patience, however, now seemed exhausted, by the resolute refusal of the poor sufferers, and their stedfast perseverance in witnessing a "good confession" of the name of Jesus. He went away disappointed, denouncing instant and summary vengeance.

That very day, the sixth of their confinement,—on the arrival of the gallant, and soon, alas! lamented General Neill, with his Fusileers,—a band of European and Sikh soldiers sallied out from the fort to attack the rebels. After a severe conflict, the latter were totally defeated; and Gopi Nath, with his family, and the other Europeans, were delivered. Soon they were safe within the fort, and

cherished in the very lap of Christian kindness. Then did they joyously unite with their missionary brethren, and others, in praising God, who had so wondrously sustained them amid such trials and sufferings, and strengthened them to make a full and open confession of his blessed name.

After four years longer of faithful labour for his Lord, Gopi Nath NUNDI was taken to his rest and his reward. He died at Futtehpore, (truly to him; as the Hindoo name signifies, "the place of victory,") on 23d November 1861.

Reader! have *you* ever seen anything in Christ to make him so precious to your soul, that for him you desire to live, and for him, if need be, you would be willing to die? It was so with this noble Indian confessor; and so, by the grace of God, it will be with all who are truly his. He is all their salvation, and all their desire. Remember Christ's own words: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. x. 37, 38.)

Reader! all that Christ was to Gopi Nath Nundi, he is willing to be to *you*. "If thou knewest the gift of God," . . . "thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 10, 14.)

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SEPTEMBER 1880.

"BY-AND-BY."

TOO TRUE A TALE.



See page 4.

"OH, where is the place? Do show me the place!"

The demand, which was rather an entreaty, proceeded from an elderly woman, very respectably dressed. She was intensely excited. Tears were flowing down her cheeks, where time had already made its furrows. The same excitement was on every countenance. Evidently

some great calamity had occurred. We followed the old woman and her guide into a large room, where a most awful and ghastly spectacle presented itself. Upon various tables lay *twenty-two corpses*. There were the old man and the infant; mothers, daughters, sons, and husbands; some of them almost crushed out of every semblance of humanity.

What was the cause of all this? No powder-mill had blown up, with its lurid flames. No ravaging army had spread slaughter and destruction around. It was a Sabbath morning. All was bright, and calm, and happy. The bells were ringing from every steeple, to welcome the day of rest.—A party of pleasure had been on its way to London. Merriment was universal, when, in a moment—while the laugh was ringing in the ear—the air was rent with shrieks and groans of mortal agony. A collision had taken place between two trains, and, without warning, twenty-two persons suddenly passed from time into eternity!

Weeping friends and heart-stricken relatives filled the room where the dead were laid. These were in their holiday attire, stained with their own blood. The old woman we have alluded to passed from one mangled body to another, until her eye rested on that of a young man in the prime of life, frightfully disfigured. With a paroxysm of grief, she took the cold hand in hers, and, seeing I looked sympathizingly at her, poured out her grief in heartrending language.

"Oh, sir!" she said, "this poor lad is my son. He *would* go yesterday. I wanted him not to go. And now—you see! He was a good boy, sir."

"Do you think," said I, "that he had given his heart to God?"

I had doubts myself; for I thought a man that had truly come to Christ would know the value of the Sabbath as a means of grace, and not spend it in his own pleasures. Still I was anxious to know if there had been any signs of repentance.

"Why, sir," replied the woman, "he went to church sometimes; and he never swore, nor got drunk."

"Did he pray?"

"Why, yes, sir—sometimes."

This was poor encouragement. Still I felt interested in the young man; and, having directed the weep-

ing mother to Him who himself wept at Lazarus' tomb, I promised to call on her. On fulfilling my promise a day or two after, I found the history of the widow's son was as follows. Oh that the unconverted reader may lay its lessons to heart!

Thomas W—— was an only son. His mother petted him with a foolish fondness. She was blind to his faults, until they forced themselves on her notice; and then her rebukes took no effect. His father had died when he was very young, leaving a small annuity to his widow. Out of this Mrs. W—— apprenticed her son to an engineer. His master, a godly man, frequently, in conversation with his apprentices, urged them to give their hearts to the Lord. Young W—— felt softened, and resolved to do so. It was the early striving of the Holy Spirit. For a time he regularly attended the house of God, and seemed earnest about his soul. But in an evil hour he formed the acquaintance of a young man, who became to him a kind of "evil genius." Gay and dissipated, he ridiculed W—— so intensely, that he led him to avoid all mention of religion. Companions are helps, either good or bad. If they do not assist us on our heavenward way, they assist us in becoming the servants of sin. Let every one who has an acquaintance, or friend, just ask himself,—Does my friend care about his soul? Is he a man of prayer? Does he trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and strive to walk like him? Are his conversation and actions toned by love to the Lord? And if not, depend upon it,—though he or she be dear as a right hand or right eye,—your duty is to *avoid* them, if you value your own soul; for if they do not make you *better*, they will certainly make you *worse*.

Young W——, fascinated by his friend's society, gradually yielded himself entirely to his influence.

The first strivings of conscience were quenched. Sunday evening was spent in strolling about and smoking—often in playing cards. One day he and several others were bathing. Ever fond of adventure, W—— sought the deepest part of the pond. He had swam for some time, when he took cramp, and before he had time to cry out, he sank. “Where is W——?” The pond was dragged, and he was recovered. For a time he hung between life and death. With returning consciousness came a resolve once more to turn to God. In an agony of soul he sought for pardon through Christ. Several weeks passed. Everyone who visited him believed him a changed man. In course of time he recovered. But while walking out one day, he encountered his old companion. W—— had resolved he would shun him; but it was in *his own strength* his resolution was made.

“So I hear you’ve turned Methodist again, Tom!” he said. “I didn’t believe it, for I thought you had too much good sense for that; but I heard the parson declare you were *really converted*.” And he made a grimace at the expression. Tom was silent.

“Is it true, old fellow? No, I see it is not. So come to my lodgings, and we’ll have a bottle together—it will do you good.”

With an accusing conscience, but unable to resist, W—— consented. He listened to the ribald scorn heaped upon religion, and the blasphemous infidelity of his companion, and he felt himself a partner in the sin. Despair seized on his soul. Satan whispered, “It is no use praying any more. This is the second time you’ve fallen. There is no more hope for you.” With a wretched heart the young man returned home, with those words sounding like a knell within him—“It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, . . . if they shall fall away, to renew

them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Hebrews vi. 4–6.) In vain did he try to drown in sin the voice of conscience: it still made itself heard.

Not long after, Mrs. W—— removed to Brighton. Here Tom gradually fell into still greater dissipation. All this time conscience kept urging him to return to God. Yet still the same plea was given, “I will, by-and-by.” How marvellous is *God’s patience with sinners*! We think if we give a man a trial twice, or even thrice, and he does not amend, that he has no further claim on our sympathies. But let us think of the numberless times the Lord deigns to try *us*. He knocks at the closed door. There is no response; and yet he knocks again and again, and still waits, long after human patience would have been exhausted.

About this time a storm occurred at Brighton. It was one of the severest ever known. Young W—— and his profligate acquaintances were returning home on that memorable night. The storm made no impression on their minds. Just, however, as they were turning the corner of a street, a chimney-pot was thrown from a tall house, and a fragment, in its fall, struck W——, and he fell senseless to the earth. He was carried home to his wretched mother, and this time all hopes were given up. In a terror not to be described, his conscience awoke at the sight of an impending eternity.

“O God,” he cried, “have pity on me! But there’s no pity for me. I have sinned *too much*. There’s nothing but hell *for me*.” In vain did they reason with him on the infinite love of Christ, willing, at all times, to save to the uttermost. Satan urged his repeated backslidings, and despair seemed settled on his heart. He was again impressed.

But his soul was unrenewed. The impression was not lasting. In his heart of hearts he longed to return to the sins he loved, and hoped, *by-and-by*, he should yet be saved.

Thomas W—— recovered. His heart was not grateful. He thought not of the mercy that had hitherto spared him. He not only returned to his old companions, but formed an acquaintance with a young woman of light character. To supply this new “friend” with money, extortionate demands were made on the mother, who, still hoping even against hope in her son’s future reclamation, gave him all she had.

It was Saturday night previous to the accident. W—— and his female companion were spending what they called a gay evening at a public-house. He, much the worse for liquor, promised before he left her, to take her to London on the morrow. When the morning came, he rose and dressed himself with care.

“Where are you going?” asked his mother.—“To London.”—“Don’t go, Tom,” said she imploringly; “stay at home with me, and take me to church. You’re never at home now.”

“No; I must go, mother: and if I stayed, I shouldn’t go to church.”

“Oh, Tom! you haven’t been since you got better. What will become of you?” Staggered by the question, he tried to laugh it off by saying—“You’re very dull to-day; but never mind, you’ll see I shall become quite a religious man *by-and-by*.”

She saw him depart, despite her entreaties; and with a heavy heart

she returned to her room, where she shed many tears.

At the station he met his wicked companion. “Come along,” he said, in high glee. “I mean to have a jolly day. The old lady tried to keep me at home to go to church; but it was no go.” And with an irreverent laugh they entered the carriage. A few hours later, their mangled corpses were brought back, and the frightful intelligence of the catastrophe was conveyed to their homes.

Reader, this is a sad, but a true story. Does it not proclaim, as with a voice of thunder, to those who have not as yet turned to God, “*To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart.*”

Perhaps this may meet the eye of some heartless youth who is bringing down a father’s grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and whose course of sin has been like W——’s, —almost step for step,—*excepting the last*. But if life remains, there is still space for repentance. O young man, will you go on in sin till it is too late? “*Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?*” Remember, your continuance in sin is a deliberate *choosing* of damnation for yourself. Turn to that Saviour who gave his life to ransom sinners from eternal death. You will never know what happiness is till you have tasted of the pardoning love of God. Will you not now say, in the simplicity of faith,—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,—
O Lamb of God, I come.”

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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"OUR OWN WAY."



See page 4.

MAN is a great traveller, even if he never move from the place where he is born. He is always going on and on, along the road that leads through life unto the end. Whether he like it or not, he can never stop his march,—never even call a halt. In his very sleep, although his limbs may not move, his heart is beating out its life-blood. Time is going on—

life is going on—and he is so much nearer death at the end of his sleep than he was at the beginning.

All men are out on this journey. No man can leave the great highway until breath leave his body. But on its track no two men follow the same course. Each has a pathway to himself. He makes it, or he takes it: it is his "own way." If the way be

pleasant and prosperous, he has plenty of company. But when his own way has led into darkness or distress, his companions often find *their way leads in another direction*. Perhaps the man then tries to turn. But if he do so in his own strength, he never gets far. For it is twice as hard walking up hill as down. The wind is against him, and the crowds come on to push him back. And so, wish or wander as he will, every step carries him on,—surely, ceaselessly, along his own way,—unto Eternity.

Surely, then, if you and I are among the travellers, it behoves us to ask, What road are we on? what will its end be?

"Why, what a question!" you say, "when you allow there are as many ways among men as there are men themselves." Yes, that is true; but it is also true that every way may be summed up into one of two ways,—*God's way, or, our own way*. Man's thousands of ways all run along the broad road that leadeth to destruction. God's one way alone leadeth unto life. It is a matter of life or death, then, to see that we are on the right road. There is no middle path, no open land between the one and the other. Neither is there any drifting out of one of the two ways, and then back into it again. The right way is a safe and a sure way,—it has *a beginning*,—and *an end*. Have we then asked, "*Where is this good way?*" and, "*Have we had our feet set upon it?*"

"Our own way!" That is what a man likes,—what most men mean to have. A man with a will of his own has a way of his own. Even the baby in the cradle, or on its mother's knee, kicks and screams for its own way. A little older, the spoiled child will not obey, will not give up to another. Why? because it has learned to do what it likes,—to get its own way. The boy and girl, the young man and maiden, so brought up, cry out for

"liberty." By *liberty* they mean *lawlessness*, or freedom from all restraint, and licence to do that which is right in their own eyes. Fathers and mothers feel bitterly that in their work and in their pleasures their children no longer heed them. How many a tear has fallen, how many a heart has ached, and been well-nigh broken, over the headstrong son, the self-willed daughter! But how few parents remember that perhaps it was their own doing, for they brought them up to take their own way.

"Oh, but our way was never like theirs!" some may reply. "And, indeed, I never had much of my own way," say others. Yet God tells us that "*all have gone astray*," and that "*every one has turned to his own way*." And as to a man's own way seeming right in his own eyes, or being better or worse in the eyes of others, remember God says, "*There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*." (Rom. iii. 22, 23.) Your way may be respectable, or even righteous, before men, and they may praise thee; or it may be low and vile, and full of open sin, so that others shun thee. You may think it is a wise and a good way; it may "*come and go to the place of the holy*;" it may yield you pleasure and profit for a time. Or perhaps you do not think of wisdom and goodness in the matter: you say boldly that it is the way that pleases or that pays you best,—the way you have gone so long, and that on it you mean to go.

There is nothing about which it is more difficult to get at the truth than about our own way. Our hearts love it, our habits bind us to it, the devil delights to let us have it. And so we go on and on, hoping it is all right, or meaning to make it right before we die. Perhaps conscience warns us, "You are living for self—you are living in sin—you are

going down unto death!" Does it tell of evil courses, or sinful pleasures, or dark and doubtful doings? Does it bring into the light the wickedness of the way—in thought, and word, and deed? Alas! conscience too often becomes seared as with a hot iron, till it speaks no more. The devil whispers excuses, or boldly tells a lie in your ear; and so you go on again, stifling your sense of wrong-doing, your guilty fears, your new resolutions. The one thing the wicked man cannot bear is,—to be miserable; and to face the truth about his own way makes him miserable indeed.

And so life goes on, and on : some men thinking little, or nothing at all; some saying it is all right; some knowing it is all wrong. But however they differ otherwise, the language of all such is,—“Our *lives* are our own; who is lord over us?”

Yes, alas for you! they are. None knows that so well as He whose own our lives ought to be. The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men. (Ps. xxxiii. 13.) For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. (Prov. v. 21.) And God has not only seen, but he has spoken. And here are some of the things that he has said:—

Of the *rich* man's “own way,” God saith,—

Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. (Ps. xxxix. 6.)

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, . . . I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? (Luke. xii. 16–21.)

Of the *successful* man's “own way,” God saith,—

Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. (Ps. xlix. 12.)

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (Prov. i. 32.)

Of the *worldly-wise* man's “own way,” God saith,—

They are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise, they became fools. (Rom. i. 20–22.)

It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. . . . Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (1 Cor. i. 19, 20.)

Of the *open sinner's* “own way,” God saith,—

Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished. (Prov. xi. 21.)

The wicked shall be turned into hell. (Ps. ix. 17.)

Of the *merely moral* man's “own way,” God saith,—

Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all. (Jas. ii. 10.)

Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified. (Rom. iii. 20.)

There is none righteous, no, not one. (Rom. iii. 10.)

Of the *self-righteous* man's “own way,” God saith,—

Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. vii. 22.)

Of EVERY MAN'S “own way,” God saith,—

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Prov. xvi. 25.)

Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto

the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isa. lv. 7.)

—*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* (Isaiah lv. 8, 9.)

Yes; for when every man had gone astray, when all had turned unto their own way, the Lord laid on ONE the iniquity of all. (Isa. liii. 6.) When man, by his own way, was lost, ruined, undone for ever; when there was none to help, God's arm brought salvation. (Isa. lxiii. 5.) Even He could not find a way ready made, as man had so often thought to do. He could not take *any* way. He had to make *the* way. And what a wondrous way it was! "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." (John iii. 16.)

And *where* is CHRIST the way to? To heaven? Yes, that will be true in the end. But, first, He is the way back to God. "No man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the Way." Sin has separated the soul from God. Man's sinful "own way" has landed him where he can of himself neither creep nor climb to God again, — where he can only meet him as "a consuming fire." But THE BLOOD has opened up a new and living way; a way of pardon and of peace; a way of access whereby WHOSOEVER WILL may draw nigh, without money and without price.

But God might have devised the way, and Jesus might have died to become the way, and yet men, gone far astray, might miss the way, or never hear that such a way existed. Therefore Jesus, the Good Shepherd, not only gave his life for the sheep, but comes to *seek*, as well as to save. Through what mire and darkness of sin and self-righteousness he goes after the wandering sheep, *until he find it!* (Luke xv. 4.)

We read sometimes of good men, in London and elsewhere, who go out, night after night, into the streets and the slums, to rescue the perishing. Strange tales they have to tell of the common stair, the river arch, or the sunken cellar. Fearful sights they see, of sin and suffering, of vice and misery. But what were their darkest, deadliest list, as compared with one page of the Shepherd's record of his sheep! In the highest places, as in the lowest, he finds them snared, defiled, *lost for ever*, unless *saved by him*. For nothing to be found in *them*, — for nothing but that great love wherewith he loved us, while we were yet sinners, he calls and gathers them from their own "froward and strange way," into the way of life.

To each reader of this message Jesus is saying, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life!" (John xiv. 6.) "I am the Way." "Come unto me." "Follow me." "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death." (Jer. xxxi. 8.) Which will ye choose? What will you answer to his call? Yea, or nay? — *life*, or *death*?

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THE OLD SWISS PEDLAR.



THE late well-known Dr. Malan of Geneva tells of the following interview.

At a village in Switzerland, close to a churchyard, a pedlar, pretty far advanced in years, was resting himself on a stone. The pedlar had his pack at his side, and was counting money into his hat, when a friend, named Philip, accosted him. "Have you

done well to-day, friend?"—"No; I get on as badly as a man must do who has neither strength nor credit."

Philip—Whether would you be rich as to your soul or your body?

Pedlar (with great seriousness, but with some surprise)—I prefer the health of the soul to all earthly gain, because the body will perish, but the soul will endure for ever.

Philip—Then you would be glad if I could show you how, without loss of time, to get eternal riches for your soul?

Pedlar—How can you?

Philip—I think I can. If the treasure of salvation were put into your hands, you would admit that great riches had been procured for you?

Pedlar—Yes. But my salvation is no trifling matter. It requires, you know, the labour of my whole life to gain it; and it is God, not man, that can give it.

Philip, finding the aged man so deeply serious, went on to say that God had given that gift long ago to our world, and invited men everywhere to come and take it. The pedlar, who did not belong to that village, but travelled about selling his wares, said in reply,—“But I am a Roman Catholic.” When Philip, in a kindly manner, remarked that “at any rate he had a soul, and wished to be saved from the wrath to come,” the old man looked up and said, “Certainly, sir; and I take more pains about it than perhaps you suppose.”

Philip—What are you doing to obtain salvation? Do you think your task will be soon finished?

Pedlar—Who can venture to say, while he lives, that his task is ended? I know no one who can, and I am not better than others.

The aged pedlar had all his life, till now, sought to win pardon and eternal life by his constant prayers and moral life, expecting that in the end the Lord Jesus would, on account of his earnest endeavours, receive him, as a sinner who had “done his best.” Philip began to perceive that this was the old man’s plan for winning God’s favour; and so he asked him, “Do you not know that the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered in our stead, and in that way obtained for us salvation? All your painful endeavours, and prayers, and sincere

obedience, and self-denial, cannot buy pardon and peace. Our part is to rejoice that God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

The old man thoughtfully replied, “It was wonderful love. But we must do a great deal before we can share it, and get what it gained at such a price.”

Philip—Surely you do not mean that you and I must perform what the Son of God performed? You surely do not think we must go through his suffering, and be condemned and crucified as he was?

Pedlar—Oh no, sir! Only the Son of God in our nature could suffer as he did.

Philip—But why was it that he, on the cross, offered himself as a sacrifice?

Pedlar—I know it was to save us from our sins.

Philip—Then, surely, it cannot be required of us to do and suffer again for the same end. That would be saying that the Son of God had not been able to do *all* he undertook to do. You are an old man, and it is time you should settle this matter. Think, and understand, for your everlasting happiness is concerned. You must be saved in God’s way.

Pedlar—But though Christ offered that great sacrifice for sin, you know it is expected of us that we do penance for our sins all our life, and that we should by good works make sure of the blotting out of our sins.

Philip explained to him that a sinner should come to the Saviour at once, and lay his sins on him; and that we do this, repenting of all the evil of our lives. We also ever after watch against falling into sin. In reply, the old man said that “it was something like that he meant;” and Philip then explained the matter more fully.

Philip—You are right if you mean that we ought to be grieved for causing sorrow to such a benefactor, and that it is our duty to do all that is pleasing to him. But you must not think that this desire to please him has merit in it, and is the reason why the Lord Jesus gives us the benefit of his death.

Pedlar—Then you mean, sir, that we ought to do good works, not in order to win the pardon of our sins, but to show our thankfulness to him for what he has done for us?

Philip—Yes; and let me ask you, Do you think this way appears to be the true way? Does it come home to your heart?

Pedlar—I never saw these things in that way before. I begin to understand the gladness of the good news. It comes home to my heart, and gives my conscience strange relief.

Philip said a few words before leaving him, to deepen the conviction and increase the light that had begun to get into the soul of this interesting and intelligent old man. "Ever remember," he said, "that a sinner is accepted because of what *Christ has done*; this is the plea a sinner uses in going to God—*What Christ has done*. And how blessed the result; for it is written in John i. 12: 'As many as receive Him, to them he gives power to become sons of God.' They enter God's family at once, and are numbered among the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. vi. 18.) When we receive Christ, God receives us."

We do not greatly wonder at this uninstructed man's mistakes. But strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true that, even after years of hearing and instruction, multitudes in our own country remain ignorant of the real gospel. Until the Holy Spirit opens the heart, all head-knowledge fails to make a man discern the simplicity of the way of salvation. The natural heart ever

stumbles on the threshold of the Ark, and looks about for something less simple than the words set forth. But in Matt. xi. 25, Christ declares that the way of rest from all burdens, the way of acceptance, is so simple that "babes" can be made to take it in and embrace it. It does not require "wisdom and prudence." If only the heart and will be on Christ's side, the method of salvation soon dawns on the soul's understanding. And then the man wonders how he never saw this before!

A story is well known of Columbus, who discovered America. Once he asked some who pretended to know much, to set down an egg so as to make it stand on its end. One after another tried, and failed; whereupon he chipped the egg and set it down, and of course it stood at once. "Anybody could do that!" was the exclamation of all present. "Yes," said he, "the thing is easy and simple when once discovered; why, then, did you not find it out?" It is even thus with the discovery of the simple way of getting rest by at once leaning on Christ. When you do find it, by a direct look to Jesus, you wonder how it was you missed the way so long; it is so truly simple, and plain, and free.

Notice, then,—

1. Very many among us in this land, this land of Bibles and Sabbaths, secretly entertain the idea that while Christ alone can save us, he needs some inducement to save us: we must bring him *some consideration*; just as Naaman thought about getting a cure, when he took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, to pay for his cure. (2 Kings v. 5.) This is a deep-rooted and a very common error. And yet it is plainly declared that God gives salvation "without money, and without price." (Isa. lv. 1, 2.) Righteousness is bestowed on the sinner who "worketh not," but who agrees to trust Him who did the

needed work in behalf of sinners. (Rom. iv. 5.) The sinner's leaning on Him is taken into account in order to his being declared righteous.

The very words "*freely*," and "*grace*," ("justified freely," Rom. iii. 24,)—"the *grace* that bringeth salvation," (Titus ii. 11,)—should be sufficient to chase away every thought of payment, before or after. Did Christ ever get, or ask, anything in order to induce him to heal the sick? Did he not do all "*freely* by his *grace*?" O man, forsake "*your thoughts*," and turn to a waiting Saviour at once. (Isa. lv. 9.)

Is it unkind, or untrue, to say that one great reason, yes, *the* one great reason lurking in the sinner's heart, leading him to cherish this idea, is, that it excuses him from *immediately* turning to God? He is saying in his heart, "I mean to come to Christ, but not yet—not quite yet." How slow he is to let go that something of self, or of the world, to which he has hitherto clung!

2. And some among us are wondering why all their resolutions and vows fail to be able to give them victory over corruption. It is because they put these resolutions, and pledges, and vows, and prayers, in the room of Christ. The drunkard gets victory by Christ fighting for him; and if so, the drunkard must *lean on Christ* in order to overcome. Read 1 John v. 4: "This is the victory, (*i.e.* the way to obtain victory,) that overcometh the world, even our faith." Whether you are a slave to drink, or to lust, or to covetousness, or to anger, —whatever work of the flesh you

have been enslaved by,—this is the victory—this is the means of victory!

Oh, what a difference there is between *resolving*, over and over again, and, on the other hand, throwing yourself at once into the arms of redeeming love! O brother, there is a singular power in the blood of Christ, applied by the Holy Ghost, not only to cleanse from guilt, but also to melt the heart of the forgiven into tender love. Try it at once. "The *grace* that bringeth salvation *teacheth us* to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. ii. 11–13.) The Holy Spirit, in the very moment of pardon, while he seals the pardon in the heart, breathes holiness into that cleansed heart.

Cennick, a friend of the famous Whitefield, one who had tried other ways, and found out the true way at last, has sung about this in memorable lines:

"This is the way I long had sought,
And mourned because I found it not:
My grief, my burden, long had been
That I could never cease from sin.

"The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more;
Till late I heard the Saviour say,
'Come hither, soul, *I am the Way!*'

"So, glad, I come; and thou, blessed Lamb,
Will take me to thee as I am:
Nothing but sin I thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive!

"Then will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God!"

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LAST THINGS.

"At the last."—PROV. v. 11.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



See page 4.

THIS lamp, "AT THE LAST," warned of danger in the particular case to which the words in the book of Proverbs refer. Methinks it must be equally useful everywhere else, and it may help us all to understand the truth of matters if we will look at them in the light which this wonderful lamp yields. If I can apply it to certain things to-day, they

will come out in their true light. "At the last," shall be the rod in my hand with which I shall touch tinsel, and it shall disappear, and you will see it is not gold, and I will touch varnish and paint, and you shall understand that they are really what they are, and not what they profess to be.

It seems to me a fitting occasion

for holding up this light, when we have come to the end of the year, and shall soon be at the beginning of another. We will, then, examine the past and the future of life in the light of "At the last." May it teach us wisdom, and make us walk as in the fear of God.

I. DEATH is "at the last." In some sense it is *the* last of this mortal life. It is the last of our period of trial here below, it is the last of the day of grace. It is the last of the day of mortal sin. The tree falleth when we die, and it sprouteth not again; the house is washed from the foundations, and it is built no more, if it hath been founded on sin. Death is the end of this present life. And how certain is it to all of us! This year we have had many tokens of its certainty. It has been a year of dying rather than of living, and you may look upon yourselves and wonder that you are here. Some greener than we are have been cut down. You that are ripe, are you ready?

Now, in the light of all this, I want you to look upon mortal sins. Let me take you upstairs to your own dying chamber; for *there*, perhaps, the lamp will burn best for you. Look at actions which you have thought to be great, and upon which you have prided yourself,—how will they look *at the last*? You made money; you made money fast; you did the thing very cleverly. Now you are dying, and what do you think of all that? Is it so great as it seemed to be? Oh, how you strained yourself to reach it, and you have got it, and you are dying. What do you think of it now?

Let us look at our selfish actions in that light. A man says, "I know how to make money," "and I know how to keep it too," says he; and he prides himself that he is not such a fool as to be generous, nor such a simpleton as to give either to God or to the poor. Now, there he lies.

Ah! do you know how to keep it now? Can you take it with you? You are come to the water's side; how much of it will you carry through? Ah, fool! how much wiser hadst thou been if thou hadst laid up thy treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt! Thou calledst such men fools when thou wast living. What dost thou think them now that thou art dying? Who is the fool,—he that sent his goods beforehand, or he that stored them up here to leave them everlastingly?

I would also, dear friends, that some of you would look at your self-righteousness in the light of death. You have been very good people, very upright, honest, moral, amiable, generous, and so on, and you are resting on what you are. Do you think this will bear your weight when you come to die? When you are in good health any form of religion may satisfy, but a dying soul wants more than sand to rest on. You will want the Rock of Ages. Then let me assure you, that in the light of the grave, all confidence, except confidence in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, is a clear delusion.

And, dear friends, let me ask as I hold up the light, how will sin appear when we come to die? It is pleasant now, and we can excuse it, calling it a little trivial mistake, a juvenile error, an imprudence, and so on; but how will sin appear when you come to die? What a horrid prospect, to be shut in with our sins for ever, to be dying with no comrades about the bed to comfort, but with the remembrances of the past to terrify and to alarm! Think of that; and whenever you are tempted by sin or tempted by gain, look at it—"At the last!" "At the last!" God help you to judge righteous judgment.

II. And now we will turn to the second side of our lantern. The second of these last things is JUDGMENT.

After death, the judgment. When we die, we die not. When a man dieth, shall he live again? Ay, that he shall, for his spirit dieth never. We are immortal, every one of us; and when the stars go out, and, like a vesture, God's wide universe shall be rolled up, we shall be living still, a life as eternal as the eternal God himself. Oh, when we leave this world, we are told that after death there comes a judgment to us. It is not easy to stand at the bar of public opinion, and receive the verdict of condemnation; but what will it be, at the bar of God, to receive from him the sentence of damnation! God save us from that!

Let us think of this judgment a moment. Let me think of all that I have done, in the light of that. There will be present every man who has ever lived on earth. How shall I like to have all my doings published there? My very thoughts—how shall I feel when they are read aloud? And what I did in the dark—how shall I care to have that revealed in the light? And yet these things must be made known before the assembled universe. They shall all be there. More solemn still, HE shall be there; and if I have despised and rejected his salvation, I shall then see him in another fashion and after another sort. How will you face him, you that have despised him? You who have doubted his deity, how will you bear the blaze of it? You rejected and trampled on his precious blood—how will you bear the weight of his almighty arm? And God shall be there, manifestly there,—that God who is here now, even on the last day of this year, and who sees your thoughts and reads your minds at this moment. You will try to be hidden from him,—would desire hell itself, and think it a place of shelter, if you could escape from him,—but everywhere that fire shall encircle you, shall consume you, for “our God is a con-

suming fire.” You shall no more be able to escape from yourself than from God. You shall find him as present with you as your own soul. Misery unspeakable must be yours, when the voice of the God-man shall say, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!” I would to God that ye would look at all your actions in the light of the day of judgment.

III. But my lamp has a third side,—bright, gleaming like a cluster of stars. The third of the “last things” is HEAVEN,—the portion, I trust, of many of us. You have been toiling, toiling very hard, and wiping the sweat from your brow, and saying, “My lot is not a desirable one. Oh, how weary am I! I cannot bear it!” Courage, brother; courage, sister. There is rest for the weary, there is eternal rest for the beloved of the Lord; and when thou shalt arrive in heaven, how little, how utterly insignificant, thy toil will seem, even if it shall have lasted threescore years and ten. And you have had many losses and crosses; you were once well-to-do, but you are poor now. You will have to go home to-day to a very poor abode, and to a scanty meal. Oh, but, beloved, you will not be there long. “In my Father's house are many mansions.” It is but an inn thou art tarrying at awhile, and if the accommodation be rough, thou art gone to-morrow; so complain not.

Would to God we could look upon all our actions in the light of heaven,—I mean those who are believers in Jesus Christ. And, dear brethren and sisters, if in your Sunday-school teaching, or visiting, or talking to others, you can bring any to glory, you will, if it be possible, multiply your heaven, and make it all the more glad and joyful. Look at your joy in the light of heaven, and you will make it other than it now looks.

IV. We now turn to the fourth of the four last things, and that is, let us look at things in the light

of HELL. Bring that lantern here. Here is a young man very merry. "Ho! ho!" he sings, "Christians are fools." Hold my light up. There you are, without God, without hope, with the great gate of death shut upon you, and barred for ever. Who is the fool now? Oh, when your spirits are damned, as they must be if you live without a Saviour, you will think laughing a poor thing. Laugh now, sir! Scoff now! For a few minutes' merriment you sold eternal joys. Mark that man in his agony. He made money by sin, and there he is. He gained the whole world, and lost his own soul. How does it look now? "I would give thirty thousand pounds," said an English gentleman when he lay dying, "if any man would prove to me to a demonstration that there is no hell." Ay, but if he had given thirty thousand worlds, that could not be proved, and now, with pangs unutterable, he knows it so.

And how will *unbelief* look in hell? There are no infidels anywhere but on earth: there are none in heaven, and there are none in hell. Atheism is a strange thing. Even the devils never fell into that vice, for "the devils believe and tremble." And there are some of the devil's children that have gone beyond their father in sin; but how will it look when they are for ever lost?

And, dear friends, I have another thought. How will *procrastination* seem when once you get there? Some of you have been listening to the gospel a long time. You have often had impressions, but

you have always said, "By and by," "By and by." You have been aroused, and aroused again, but still it has been, "To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow." How will to-morrow ring in your ears when once you are lost? I feel this morning as if I would do with you what the Roman ambassadors did with Antiochus. They met him and asked him whether he meant war or peace. He said he must see; and one of them, taking his staff, made a circle round him where he stood, and said, "You must answer before you leave that spot. If you step out of that, it is war. Now, war or peace?" And I too would draw a secret circle round you at this moment, and say to you, "Which shall it be,—sin or holiness, self or Christ? Shall it be grace or enmity, heaven or hell?" Dear friends, have you not within you a sense that you are dying? Now, since there is a world to come, and you believe there is, how can some of you play with these things?

What are you waiting for, my friend? For another season? Does not God say, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation"? Oh that you were wise, and would think of your latter end, and seek after God! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is the gospel, "Whosoever believeth is not condemned." To believe is to trust. Oh that you may have grace to trust your souls with the Lord Jesus, and then we shall not need to fear those words, "AT THE LAST," nor the light of the four "last things,"—DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, and HELL.

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"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL."



See page 4.

"NONE BUT CHRIST! NONE BUT CHRIST!"

(From the Original Woodcut in Foxe's "Book of Martyrs.")

WHAT the Lord Jesus Christ puts foremost, men put hindmost. Men reckon money the "main chance;" Jesus says, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

Is this denied? O man of the world, doth not thy speech "bewray thee"? The truth comes out in your words. It is wrought into your everyday forms of expression. A man has lately begun business. "Is he doing well?" What does that mean? Does it not mean, Is he

making any money? "He is doing no good,"—which means, he is making no money.

As a matter of fact, such is "the way of the world." And it is sad, yet true, that it is *natural* for the natural man so to judge. "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh." Reader, if you are yet unchanged, is it not so with you? Are you not more influenced by the seen things of this world, than by the unseen things of the world to come? There are two kinds of living,—living for Christ, and living for the world. You may be unwilling to confess it, but does not conscience tell you that you are living for the world? Christ says you are wrong. He says that "ONE THING is needful," namely, "to win Christ, and be found in him." That "one thing" you have not. You and Christ, in this momentous matter, are on different sides. How will this end? If it be so when you die, what will become of you?

JESUS had set out from Jerusalem by the Jericho road. He had been telling his disciples of the man who, down that road, fell among thieves. Soon, about two miles from Jerusalem, he came to a quiet village. It was Bethany. There was a dwelling there,—the only one, as we would gather from Scripture, where he was so at home that he could go without an invitation.—"A certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but ONE THING IS

NEEDFUL: AND MARY HATH CHOSEN

THAT GOOD PART, WHICH SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER." (Luke x. 38-42.)

I. ONE THING IS NEEDFUL. How gracious the warning, that one thing is needful: how gracious the comfort, that only *one thing* is needful,—that there is only one thing *which we cannot do without*. Can we trust to the testimony? A scholar says, learning is the one thing. A soldier says, military glory. A man of the world says, gay pleasure. A covetous man says, money. We cannot trust them. If we could trust their friendship, we might not their wisdom. If we could trust their wisdom, we might not their friendship. But who is the witness here? It is the Friend of sinners, who "knew what was in man," who came to seek and to save that which was lost, who is coming again to judge the world, who tells us that *one thing is needful*.

What is that *one thing*? David said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after." Paul said, "This one thing I do, I press towards the mark." Who can doubt that these were one and the same thing, "*to win Christ, and be found in him*"?

By nature I am guilty before God. I am a sinner, and the wages of my sin is death. And my heart is corrupt, and enmity against him. The law requires death for my sin before I can be pardoned. The law requires a perfect obedience, ere I can stand accepted before God. How can I escape? for without shedding of blood there is no remission. Where can I find a righteousness? for in me dwelleth no good thing. Such was our state, when "God so loved" us. He sent his only-begotten Son into the world, "that we might live through him." Jesus came in the sinner's nature. He fulfilled the law in our room and stead. He "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to

God." He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. When, as a poor lost sinner, I cast myself upon Jesus, all that he has done becomes mine. In his righteousness I am accepted, by his Spirit I am renewed. His glorious fulness meets every need of my ruined nature. And in all this fulness, God holds him out as his FREE GIFT to me. One thing, as a sinner, I need,—to have Christ for mine.

Surely that one thing is *needful*. I cannot do without it. Mark the figures under which Jesus is set forth: "The bread of life,"—"the living water,"—"the light of the world." Again, as "rest" for the weary; and as life from the dead: "I am the resurrection and the life." Now, bread is to man not a mere comfort,—he must have it, or perish; nor water,—he must have it, or perish; nor shelter,—he must have it, or perish; nor light,—he must have it, or perish; nor rest,—he must have it, or perish; nor life,—he must have it, or remain dead.

O my soul, if such be thy need of Christ, what must it be to be "without Christ"? It is to have a soul hungry, and no bread; thirsty, and no water; in darkness, and no light; weary, and no rest; dead, and no life,—dead in trespasses and sins.

But if I have the "one thing," let me have what else I may, be it little or much, all will be well. If I have Christ, I may be happy, though poor. "What are you about to-day, John?" said a minister to an old Christian, whom he found in his comfortless cottage, on a cold snowy day, sitting poring over his Bible. "Oh, sir," was the answer, "I'm just sitting under His shadow wi' great delight." And "needful" in death, it will not then fail me. If I have Christ, I can die without friends, as the thief on the cross died: I can die without money, as Lazarus died: I can die a cruel

and bloody death, like Stephen, when he "fell asleep." If to me to live has been Christ, to me to die will be gain.

II. THAT "GOOD PART" IS FREE FOR ANY ONE TO CHOOSE. "Mary hath *chosen* that good part." The Bible reveals that "salvation belongeth unto the Lord." It is by sovereign grace, not only that Christ is brought to a sinner, but that a sinner is brought to Christ. But it also says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." No man comes to Christ without *choosing* Christ; and no man ever truly chose Christ, who was not saved. No man gets Christ against his will. The thief on the cross,—Saul of Tarsus,—the Ethiopian eunuch,—Lydia,—the jailor,—the three thousand at Pentecost,—by all these the good part was freely *chosen*, and in choosing it they found life.

Opposite to a church in the country, stands the village well. That well is free to every dweller there. It furnishes to every villager his every drink of water. Not more free is that water, to all comers, than Jesus, held forth in his word, is to "him that heareth," throughout the whole world. He is free to be chosen by the youngest, the oldest, the highest, the lowest, the richest, the poorest. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The wisdom or folly of one hour may sweeten or embitter a man's life upon earth to his dying day. But a long life is shorter, as compared with eternity, than an hour is compared with the longest life. And if the act of an hour can sweeten or embitter the one, how solemn the thought that the choice we make during our brief

life on earth will affect our destiny in the other for ever and ever !

III. THE "GOOD PART," IF CHOSEN, SHALL NEVER BE TAKEN FROM US.

The one thing, the only one, which Jesus says is "needful," is this one thing, the only one, which he too says shall never be taken from us. A father places all his happiness in his wife or his child : death desolates his home, and his joy is gone. The rich man glories in his riches : by the failure of a bank, or disasters in business, his riches make wings and flee away. We knew of one, who once owned hundreds of acres, brought to thankfulness for three-pence for carrying in coals from the street. But even though money, family, friends, comforts remain to us through life, we must part with them all when we come to die.

But if CHRIST is mine, he is mine for ever. If in him I have peace, the world did not give it, and none of the changes of earth can take it away. If Saul of Tarsus was ever rich in money, for Christ's sake he suffered the loss of all things, and doubtless of his money among the rest. Perhaps when he came over to Europe, he had a few Greek coppers in his pocket, given him by the saints at Troas to pay his way on his journey. Even these would be taken from him when he came to Philippi, where his clothes were torn from his back, and he was cast like a thief into the "inner prison." But Paul had something left which no robber could reach. He still had the "pearl of great price," safe, not in his pocket, but in his heart ; and out

of that treasure, ere he left the prison, he had made the poor jailor as rich as himself. He was indeed an example of his own description,—"as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." The "good part" he had chosen no man could take from him.

A thousand happy deathbeds witness to the words, "It shall not be taken away from her." These be the last words of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel : "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which is all my salvation, and all my desire." At old Smithfield, in London, in the year 1538, John Lambert was burnt for the testimony of Jesus. When his feet and legs were consumed, and the soldiers hoisted his poor body on their pikes to the length of his chain, "he, lifting up such hands as he had, and his finger-ends flaming with fire, cried unto the people in these words, '*None but Christ ! none but Christ !*'" He had chosen the good part, and it was not taken from him.

Reader ! if these be words of truth and soberness, suffer us solemnly to ask, *Which way are you going*, in this matter ? Christ hath said that to find HIM is the one thing needful. *Do you believe him ?* And has it not been made plain that this good part *you may choose*, if you will ? And is it not plain, too, that, if chosen, it would never be taken from you ? We affectionately ask you, *Can you go on in life without it ?*

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ONLY ONE WAY.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—ACTS iv. 12.



THESE words were spoken by a poor and friendless Christian, in the midst of a persecuting Jewish council. They were spoken by the apostle Peter, the very man who three times over denied his Lord. There is another spirit in him now. He stands up boldly before priests and Sadducees, and tells them the truth to their face,—“This is the stone that

was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” (Acts iv. 11, 12.)

I. *First, let me show you the doctrine of the text.*

The apostle Peter says of Christ,

"Neither is there salvation in any other." Now, what is this?

He means that no one can be saved from sin,—its guilt, power, and consequences,—excepting by Jesus Christ. He means that no one can have peace with God the Father,—obtain pardon in this world, and escape wrath to come in the next,—excepting through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ. Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, kings and poor men,—all alike must either be saved by Jesus or lost for ever.

There was but one place of safety in the day when the flood came upon the earth, and that was Noah's ark. All other places and devices,—mountains, towers, trees, rafts, boats,—all were alike useless. So also there is but one hiding-place for the sinner,—he must venture his soul on Christ.

Such is the doctrine of the text. "No salvation but by Jesus Christ: in him, plenty of salvation,—salvation to the uttermost, salvation for the very chief of sinners;—out of him, no salvation at all." "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 11, 12.)

Reader, perhaps you think this is all old news; but remember that you are to venture the whole salvation of your soul on Christ, and on Christ only. You are not to rest partly on Christ,—partly on doing all you can,—partly on keeping your church,—partly on receiving the sacrament. In the matter of your justification, Christ is to be *all*. This is the doctrine of the text.

Remember that heaven is before you, and Christ the only door into it; hell beneath you, and Christ

alone able to deliver you from it; the law against you, and Christ alone able to redeem you; sin weighing you down, and Christ alone able to put it away. This is the doctrine of the text. Do you see it?

II. *Some reasons why the doctrine of the text must be true.*

1. Let me say, for one thing, it must be true, *because man is what man is.*

Now, what is man? There is one broad, sweeping answer, which takes in the whole human race: man is a sinful being.

Is there no country on the face of the globe where sin does not reign? Is there no tribe on earth, where, far away from civilisation, and commerce, and money, and gunpowder, and luxury, and books, morality and purity flourish? No, reader, there is none. Look over all the voyages and travels you can lay your hand on, from Columbus down to Cook, and you will see the truth of what I am asserting. Whatever else savages have been found ignorant of, they have never been found ignorant of sin.

But are there no men and women in the world who are free from this corruption of nature? No, reader, there have been none. Look over all the lives of the holiest Christians; mark how the brightest and best of Christ's people have always had the deepest sense of their own defectiveness and corruption. Patriarchs and apostles, fathers and reformers, Luther and Calvin, Knox and Bradford, Rutherford and Bishop Hall, Wesley and Whitefield, Martyn and M'Cheyne,—all are alike agreed in feeling their own sinfulness. The more light they have, the more humble and self-abased they seem to be; and the more to glory, not in themselves, but in Christ.

Now, what does all this seem to prove? That human nature is so corrupt, that, left to himself, no man could be saved. Man's case appears

to be a hopeless one without a Saviour,—and that a mighty Saviour too. There must be a mediator, an atonement, an advocate, to make such poor sinful beings acceptable with God; and I find this nowhere excepting in Jesus Christ.

I lay these things before you, and ask you to consider them. To say we are all sinners, is one thing; to have an idea what sin must be in the sight of God, is quite another. Depend on it, no one can really know what man is, and not see that the doctrine of our text must be true: There can be no salvation except by Christ.

2. The doctrine of our text must be true, *because God is what God is.*

The more any man considers calmly what God really is, the more he must feel the immeasurable distance between God and himself; the more he meditates, the more he must see that there is a great gulf between him and God. His conscience, I think, will tell him, if he will let it speak, that if ever he is to stand before him in judgment with comfort, he must have some mighty helper, or he will not be saved.

And what is all this but the very doctrine of our text? We want this, and nothing less than this. Vague notions of mercy will never give true peace. And such a Saviour, such a friend, such an advocate, is nowhere to be found excepting in the person of Jesus Christ.

3. Let me say, in the third place, this doctrine must be true, *because the Bible is what the Bible is.*

All through the Bible, from Genesis down to Revelation, there is only one simple account of the way in which man must be saved. It is always the same: only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ,—through faith; not for our own works and deservings.

You see it dimly revealed at first: it looms through the mist of a few promises, but there it is. You have

it more plainly afterwards: it is taught by the pictures and emblems of the law of Moses, the schoolmaster dispensation. You have it still more clearly by and by: the prophets saw in vision many particulars about the Redeemer yet to come. You have it fully at last, in the sunshine of New Testament history: Christ incarnate,—Christ crucified,—Christ rising again,—Christ preached to the world. One golden chain runs through the whole volume, whether a coming Christ, or a crucified Christ. When I see Abel owning Christ in his better sacrifice, at one end of the Bible, and the saints in glory in John's vision rejoicing in Christ, at the other end of the Bible, I feel bound to believe that the doctrine of the text is the doctrine of the whole Bible: No salvation, no way to heaven, excepting by Jesus Christ. Christ is the way, and the only way; Christ the truth, and the only truth; Christ the life, and the only life.

III. And now, lastly, *let me show you some consequences which flow naturally out of our text.*

If Christ is the only way of salvation, what are we to feel about many people in the world? Many persons think it uncharitable to say anything which appears to condemn others. For my part, I believe the greatest charity is to tell the greatest quantity of truth.

One mighty consequence is the utter uselessness of any religion without Christ.

There are many to be found in Christendom at this day who have a religion of this kind,—That there is a God; that there is what they are pleased to call providence; that God is merciful; that there will be a state after death;—this is about the sum and substance of their creed. As to the distinguishing tenets of Christianity, they do not seem to recognise them at all. Such a religion may possibly do as a toy to live with: it is far too unreal to die with. It

utterly fails to meet the wants of man's conscience; it cannot comfort, for it cannot save. Reader, beware of it, if you love life. *Beware of a religion without Christ.*

Another consequence is, the *great error committed by those who add anything to Christ, as necessary to salvation.*

I fear the Church of Rome does not stand alone in this matter. I fear there are thousands of professing Protestants who are often erring in the same direction, although, of course, in a very different degree. These, however unwittingly, appear to me to have a most uncomfortable tendency to add to the doctrine of our text,—to be practically replying to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" not merely, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," but also, "Come and join us."

Now, I like every one to be decided in his views of ecclesiastical matters. But, however dear to us our own peculiar views may be, let us beware of thrusting them in between the sinner and the Saviour. In the things of God's word, be it remembered addition as well as subtraction is a great sin.

The last consequence to be learned is, *the utter absurdity of supposing that we ought to be satisfied with a man's state of soul if he is only sincere.*

There are thousands who say in the present day, "We have nothing to do with the opinions of others. If they are sincere, we hope they will be saved, even as we." And all this sounds liberal and charitable, and people like to fancy their own views are so.

Now, I believe such notions are

entirely contradictory to the Bible. On such principles, the Druidical sacrifices, the car of Juggernaut, the fires of Smithfield, might each and all be defended. It will not stand; it will not bear the test of Scripture. Once allow such notions to be true, and you may as well throw your Bible aside altogether. Sincerity is not Christ, and therefore sincerity cannot put away sin.

A few words by way of application.

First, If there is no salvation excepting in Christ, do not be content with hearing, and approving, and assenting to the truth, and going no further. If there is *only one way*, make sure that *you* are in it.

Secondly, Do you really believe that Christ is the only way to heaven? Then live as if you believed it.

Look round the circle of your own relatives and friends, and think how many of them are not yet in Christ. Try to do good to them in some way or other. Let nobody alone who is out of Christ, if only you have opportunities of reaching him. I know all this may sound like enthusiasm and fanaticism. I wish there was more of it in the world.

Thirdly, If there is no salvation excepting in Christ, let us love all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. If our charity and liberality are wider than that of the Bible, they are worth nothing at all. Indiscriminate approbation of all religious opinions, is only a new name for infidelity. But let us hold out the right hand to all who love the Lord Jesus.

BISHOP RYLE.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

APRIL 1882.

"I CANNOT COME NOW."



See page 2.

In the great war in America, twenty years ago, when the Northern States at last set free the slaves, many most affecting incidents occurred, and many most instructive.

One of the members of "The Christian Commission" (a band of Christian men who had gone from their homes solely with the desire of being of use to the wounded and

dying) was sent for one day, and asked to visit a Michigan soldier, who was near his end. He immediately went, and saw at a glance that the man had not long to live. In his pale, thin face, flushed with the last sign of flickering life, there was a beseeching, piteous longing, such as is rarely seen, but at first the man gave little heed to the friend who came to

his bedside. "But," says this friend, "as I laid the back of my hand upon his burning cheek, and stroked the hair from his forehead, he turned his eyes full upon me, and his look spoke unutterable things."

"How are you to-day, my friend?"

"Poorly, sir, very poorly,—a few days more, only a few!"

"You are all ready, I trust?"

"I am going—there is no help for it. If you call that *ready*, I am ready."

"But I mean, are you prepared to die? Is the exchange of worlds going to be pleasant to you?"

"Pleasant! It is awful, sir; horrible beyond all account! But I have got to come to it."

"No, my brother, there is no such 'got to' about it. You are still in this world, and there is mercy. This is the world where Christ died. Let me tell you what he says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' " (John vi. 37).

"I know it—I know it all. I have heard it a thousand times."

"Well, is not it true?"

"It may be; but not for me."

"But he says, If you *will* come to him. He does not say, If you *had* come, or, If you would have come, but, If now you will come. It is, 'Him that *cometh*,' cometh to-day, he 'will in no wise cast out.' It is a great pity you have not come already, but——"

"Pity! it's my ruin, sir. *I cannot come now! I will not!* See there, stranger, do you think I am going to give that withered, dried-up hand to God, after I have given all its strength to the devil? Do you think I'm going to drink the devil's wine all my life, up to this last day in the hospital, and then offer the settlings to Jesus?"

"It was wrong, it was mean for you to refuse the best to your God. But see what you are doing now! Jesus has followed you all through, and to-day looks for this *remnant* of

your life—these 'settlings,' as you call it. He really desires you to give him now your trust and affection, while you lie on this bed dying."

"Is it honourable or decent to give it now?"

"If he ask it, is it honourable or decent for you to refuse it? Hitherto you have refused him everything. He makes now a last request; will you refuse that?"

"I see it,—that's so. *But I am afraid I shall!* You have come a little too late; it's getting dark now."

The visitor prayed at his bedside, but the dying soldier seemed only partially conscious. He then sat down beside him. In a little he heard him say in a whisper, scarcely audible, "If I could get back again—back again!" Supposing the soldier was thinking of his friends and home in his native country, Michigan, the visitor asked him about his home; but rousing himself slightly, and with a shake of his head, he said, "No, no! A boy again, a boy again!" and then seemed to fall into a sleep. But it was the sleep of death.

It seems as if boyhood, with its thousand opportunities and invitations, had come up before this dying soldier at that moment; but "the harvest was past, the summer ended, and *he was not saved.*" And yet he might have been saved, even in that hour. That same Jesus who wept over Jerusalem and said, "Oh, if thou hadst known, even thou, *at least in this thy day,*" would have received this sinner at that last moment. For *grace* seeks no payment—not the payment of a year, or week, or even an hour. Only accept the Substitute, and in that moment, whether the moment be at the beginning, the middle, or the very end of life, you are saved!

We once stood beside a dying youth who was thoroughly awakened, and who saw with some clearness the freeness of the gospel, and its application

to his own case, but still there was something in his thoughts that hindered his unhesitating rest on the atoning Sacrifice. At last he said, "But would it be *fair* in God to save me and bless me for ever, when already three or four of my companions in sin, who were not worse than I, have died as they lived, and been for ever lost?" Fellow-sinner, see how Satan tries to hinder you going in at the open door, just when it might seem impossible for you to resist the urgent invitation! Satan suggests, "Would it be fair in God?" or, as in the case of the Michigan soldier, "Wouldn't it be *mean* in me?" To all such, that word of the prophet (Isa. lv. 7) is addressed—"Let the wicked forsake *his thoughts*, and let him turn to the Lord," that Lord who "abundantly pardons," and casts the sin in one moment behind his back, into the depth of the sea, as far as east is from the west.

But it may be you have on your soul some dreadful sin, and you think any sin but that might have been forgiven. In the same American war referred to above, a young man gazed intently at one who was addressing a little company of soldiers, and then got up and went out. When asked why he had gone out, his reply was, "You cut me to pieces. You made me think of what 'I had done.' *Can I be saved?*" He was reminded that the blood of the Lord Jesus, God's Son, can cleanse from *all* sin; but replied, "I'm an awful sinner. I think his blood could cleanse me if I hadn't done *that*." "Done what?" "*Killed my mother!*" "Killed your mother? When? How?" "Last night I had a letter from her; it says she was almost gone, and the writing was all trembling like. She left me her dying prayer, that I would come to Christ, and meet her in heaven. When I got the letter I made fun of it with my comrades, and then sat down and wrote that she needn't

worry about my soul, that I would take care of that, but that I meant to live just as I had done, and get all there was to be got in the world, and would look after the next when I got there. Oh, sir, you don't know how that will make my poor old mother feel! It will kill her outright—I know it will."

As he said this, he shook with agony. "What can I do? What *can* I do? Is there mercy for me?" "Yes, throw yourself on Jesus." "What *can* I do?" "Kneel down now, and as a sinner seek forgiveness from the Saviour, and then write to your mother and ask her forgiveness." "It is too late for that; my mother will be dead before another letter can reach her. When she reads that wicked letter of mine, she will lay it down and die! Oh, what can I do?" "Seek mercy. God will receive you; and when your mother, in earth, or in heaven, hears that God has forgiven you for Christ's sake, she will remember your cruelty no more."

The young soldier did not find relief at once; for several days he was on the verge of suicide. He confessed his guilt to his comrades, wrote to his dying mother, and sought the prayers and help of God's people. The curse on the man who mocketh his mother seemed to rest on him. But at last he was enabled to wash in the Fountain open for sin; though whether his mother lived to hear the change on her son, is not known. Nothing less than coming to the atoning blood could have given relief to his anguish; but through that blood the Saviour said to the storm in his conscience, "Peace, be still!" and there was a great calm.

If you let Christ go away from you, you must make up your mind to live unblessed, and die unsaved. He will say, "I would have gathered you, and ye would not;" and so he departs, leaving with you sin, death,

Satan, and hell, as well as sorrow, care, toil, woe, and none to comfort you for ever.

But after all, what a poor thing it is to be saved only at last! You escape eternal ruin, but you go to heaven alone; you take no one with you. You have done nothing for others. Whereas if you receive Christ now, while still in health, you find immediate welcome as cordial and kind as that of the prodigal son; and from that moment you are in a position that enables you to be a blessing to others around you.

Nicodemus, the ruler, is saved, and his life makes it plain to all that he is a new man in Christ. All around him know it; the members of his family, his wife, his children, his servants, all feel the new light and life that is in the house; friends, neighbours, and his fellow-councillors know it, and the blessing spreads. His light so shines that men see it, and glorify the Father in heaven who has wrought the change. (Matt. v. 14.)

It was no selfish happiness that the man, out of whom Christ cast the legion of devils, carried with him to his home. Himself indeed is blessed abundantly, but others hear of his Saviour from his lips. It was blessed for him to go out and in, in the midst of the community, telling all men what Christ had done, and with what loving kindness; and what he was able to do for them, and how willing to save to the uttermost.

The Ethiopian eunuch received Christ at a time when he was in the midst of comforts, health, prosperity, honour. He welcomed the Saviour,

the Lamb of God, as his sin-bearer, and "went on his way rejoicing," not only the first day, but all through life. The men of his country are compelled to testify to his new-found happiness, for they see it in his countenance, they discover it in his contentment, they hear of it in his songs. Queen Candace cannot but be interested. His story is a testimony to the power of the cross, but his daily life, week after week, perhaps year after year, proclaims still more effectually glad tidings of great joy for all people—joy ever after for the soul that once finds the Saviour! All the palace hears, and all the land of Ethiopia. Who can tell the hundreds on hundreds whom that man's lifetime of faith led to salvation?

Get to the safe shore at once, and save others. Is not that a true and holy ambition? And then think of the reward which the Lord gives to the man who is the means of saving souls. It was a Roman law, that whoever saved a Roman citizen from death should receive what they called a civic crown, and great was that honour. But what can this mean—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"? (Dan. xii. 3.) This is God's reward to the man who not only had the wisdom himself to receive the Saviour, but who also lived a life of unselfish effort for the salvation of all, at home or abroad, whom he could reach or influence.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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EDITH AND ALICE.

A STORY OF BLESSING.

"By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—2 COR. iv. 2.



See page 3.

It was ten o'clock on a winter's morning, and Colonel H—— sat at his solitary breakfast-table reading the morning papers. Suddenly he came upon a paragraph which seemed to startle and annoy him, when a venerable-looking man entered the room. "I have called early, my dear Colo-

nel," he said, "on my way to the railway station. This morning's post brought me a letter which calls me at once to R——, and I start by the eleven o'clock train. I left home in good time, as you see, that I might take any messages you may wish to my young friends, Edith and Alice."

"Here am I," said Colonel H——, "a prisoner to the house with this tormenting gout, and full of anxiety about those two girls. It will be a great relief to my mind for you to go and see them, and I am very much obliged to you."

"Not in the least, my dear friend. But what has given you any cause of anxiety?"

"Look here," and Colonel H—— handed the paper to Mr. G——, pointing out the paragraph which had so painfully arrested his attention.

It was headed, "Progress of the Revival at R——," and ran thus:—

"While crowded churches and attentive congregations give public testimony to a glorious awakening in the minds of the mass of our people, it is with peculiar interest that we hear of the progress of the revival among the young. Many have forsaken their gay amusements, and are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, and the Lord adds daily to the band of youthful pilgrims. In some of the fashionable seminaries for education, we are informed that meetings for prayer and praise, and the study of Scripture, have been established by the pupils themselves, and have been largely blessed."

"Well," said Mr. G——, "what is there to alarm you in that? I have a great respect for religion, I am sure, and so have you; though we don't profess to be over-religious ourselves."

"I have a great respect for religion," exclaimed Colonel H—— vehemently,—"for *real* religion. I like a man to do his duty, and to act up to his principles; that's what I call religion. But as for prayer-meetings and psalm-singing, and making one's self peculiar and unlike the rest of the world, I detest it with all my heart. I think it would kill me if Edith and Alice were to turn methodists. I shall not have an easy moment till they are safe at home. When do you return?"

"By an early train to-morrow."

"Then if you will be good enough to call this afternoon and see Mrs. M—— herself, there will be abun-

dance of time to prepare them to accompany you. You can explain to her that I have no intention of removing them altogether, but must bring them home for a little while, just to satisfy my mind, and keep them out of harm's way. Take no excuse."

"Well, good-bye, my dear Colonel. Depend upon it I shall do all that lies in my power."

"Good-bye; a thousand thanks." And the door closed, while Colonel H—— returned to the breakfast-room.

"Perhaps it may already be too late," he said to himself; "perhaps Edith and Alice have already '*joined the church*,' as they call it, and will come home looking as melancholy as a pair of mutes at a funeral. Then they'll want to give up every lady-like pursuit, of course. Never touch a paint-brush, or open the piano, but spend their time teaching ragged, dirty children, and go out '*district visiting*.' Prayer-meetings got up here, I suppose, and nothing but moroseness and gloom. A pleasant prospect in my old days!"

And now we must change the scene to Mrs. M——'s school. The bell sounds the hour for recreation. A tall, graceful-looking girl of about sixteen still lingers.

"Do come out with us, Edith," Alice petitions.

"I am just going," Edith replies, laying down her brush.

The conversation was interrupted by a servant, who came to summon the Misses H—— to the drawing-room, where they were informed of their father's wish for their immediate return home. At any previous time such a summons would have been welcome, but now it was with very mingled feelings that they heard it. Edith and Alice were but very young Christians. Both had long been silently seeking and sighing for the truth, but not more than a few weeks had passed since its light

had shone into their souls. The name of Jesus had become very precious to them, and they were full to overflowing with the spirit of joy and praise; but they trembled at the thought of the difficulties and trials which might await them. Before leaving they sought counsel from their friend Mrs. M——, who advised them wisely and kindly, and prayed earnestly with and for them, that they might take a blessing to their home, and be the means of winning many souls to Christ. And when, next morning, Edith and Alice took their tearful farewell of the school which had been to them as the gate of heaven, it was with the assurance that God's presence went with them, and that he would give them rest.

Colonel H—— was waiting for their arrival, and received them most warmly. "Well," he said, after some time given to rest and refreshment, "my dear girls, I am delighted to have you come back looking so blooming and joyous. I heard of all the methodist doings at R——, and had my fears that you might be bitten as well as the rest. But now I see it is all right. Well, I think you must be obliged to me for bringing you away from that doleful set."

Edith sat pale and silent, while Alice answered warmly,—

"We were not gloomy or doleful at R——, papa. Indeed the last few weeks there were the happiest I ever spent in my life."

"Why, you were not very low-spirited at any time, were you?" said her father, with a smile.

"No," Alice answered, taking his hand affectionately, "thanks to you, dear papa, I have had a very pleasant life; but I never felt *sure and certain* of happiness till now. You know one hour might have robbed me of all the things in which I took delight. But *now* I feel quietly and soberly happy,—in secure possession of happiness, because" (and she lowered

her voice) "nothing can 'separate me from the love of Christ.'"

There was silence for a few moments, and then Colonel H—— said, gravely and anxiously,—

"Well, Edith, and what have *you* to say?"

"My dear father," she said, "I feel we ought to be perfectly candid with you in this matter. As you *ask*, I think we ought to tell you that we have both been made partakers in the blessings of this revival of true religion amongst us. I can say for myself, and I believe for Alice too, that for long years, even from childhood, we have felt *anxiety* on the subject from time to time, alarm when we heard a solemn sermon, and shrinking at the thought of death. We longed to know the way of life. We were seeking, though it was only groping in the dark. But now, thanks be to God, the way has been shown us, and we feel that 'we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And can you wonder, dear father, that this should fill us with very deep and real joy?"

Colonel H—— covered his face while his daughter was speaking. Not a word was spoken for some minutes, and then he said, in assumed displeasure, "Now, then, I suppose your accomplishments and pursuits will be all despised and neglected, and I may give up all my hopes of seeing you the ornaments of society?"

"You do not wish us to go into society just yet, dear papa," said Edith; "fourteen and sixteen are too early an age for that. And in the meantime, I assure you, we shall not neglect any study you wish us to pursue. You will find, I hope, that religion has taught us to look upon every home duty as a very sacred thing."

"Yes," said Alice fervently, "and then the recollection that every power we possess is a gift from God, gives one such a desire to improve them to the utmost. Indeed, papa, I never

felt so strong a desire for education as now, to have more influence with others."

It was pleasant to hear those two young voices speaking so earnestly, and yet so joyously. Colonel H—— felt its power; and as he rose to leave the room he held out both hands to them affectionately, and said—

"Well, God bless you, my children. I do not understand these things myself; but if your religion keep you what you are, you are welcome to it, —I will not interfere with you."

All three were much affected. "Papa," said Edith, "we have one favour to ask of you. As it is our first day at home you will not deny it."

"What is it?"

"Alice and I have been accustomed to family prayer, morning and evening, at school. We should miss it very much, and have been hoping that you would have it here, at home."

Alice's pleading eyes had spoken with her sister's words, and both waited anxiously for the answer. Colonel H—— walked up and down the room, and at last said abruptly,—

"*My* conducting a thing of the kind is out of the question. If you can manage it yourselves, you are at liberty to do so." And he left the room. He little thought that their courage would be equal to such an effort; but evening came, and to Colonel H——'s surprise, the bell was rung, and the servants assembled. Edith had selected a simple hymn, with which most of them were familiar. Then Alice opened the Bible, and began, "Who hath believed our report?" Her voice trembled

at first, but it soon grew steadier. Then they knelt. Edith's heart was very full, and she poured it forth with a simple and childlike utterance, entreating that the Saviour might now be very present in that dear home; speak, by his Holy Spirit, to every heart beneath its roof, and shed abroad his love in all their hearts.

Colonel H—— had at first stood upright, observing what passed; but as Edith prayed on, she found that he had sunk on his knees by her side, and heard him faintly join in her petitions.

Before they parted for the night, he said, "My children, these things are new to me, but I want to learn; you must be my teachers."

"No, dearest father," Edith answered fervently, "God himself will be your teacher. Let us read his word together, and pray together, and his Spirit is promised to lead us in the right way."

And so they did. "Ye shall seek me, and shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And, oh, what a blessed discovery is that! Like one of old, Colonel H—— could now say, "Formerly I, with the world, accounted the spirit of a Christian a melancholy one. But *I now see a heaven in the way to heaven*; and that one look of faith, one smile of Christ, yields more sweetness, comfort, and content than all the pleasures and delights of the world."

Reader, are *you* happy? "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed (happy) is the man that trusteth in him" (Psa. xxxiv. 8).

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WHAT SHALL I THINK ABOUT?



READER, do you ever *think* about your soul? You think about what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed. If you are rich, you think about your money, how you can lay it out to the best advantage, and how to get from it the greatest amount of happiness. If you are poor, you think how you may become richer. If you are in a mean condition, you think

how you can raise yourself. If you are in business, you think how you can buy, and sell, and get gain. If you are sick, you think how you can get your health restored. If you have children, you think how you can provide for them, and raise them in the world. All this is natural, and to a certain extent it is well.

But the Bible says that "one thing is needful." (Luke x. 42.) Do you

ever think about *that*? It says that except you repent, you shall perish. (Luke xiii. 3.) Do you think about that? It says, that except you be born again, you shall never see the kingdom of God. (John iii. 3.) Do you think about that? It says, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.) Do you think about that? It says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Do you think about *that*?

Most men have sometimes moments of alarm. They have been living, perhaps, without God, saying to themselves, "Soul, take thine ease." God sends an afflicting stroke. Sudden loss, perhaps ruin, overtakes them in their worldly affairs. They are numbered, all unexpectedly, among the many who "have seen better days." Or a dangerous illness,—a death in the house,—one near and dear taken away,—the sound of the feet of those who are carrying out the body,—the rattle of the earth on the coffin: these things come. The knock is heard. The conscience is startled, as if by a flash from the hopeless eternity which like a dark cloud hangs continually before the Christless soul. But it is not such momentary feelings we mean. We affectionately ask, do you ever *take thought* about your soul? Do you ever spend one hour in secret, in sober, earnest thought about the state of your soul before God?

We can be *lost* without thinking. We are by *nature* "children of wrath,"—"condemned already." We are by nature blind,—asleep,—dead to the things of God. We don't see, or look, or desire to look, beyond this present world. Yet blind, and asleep, and dead as we are, we nevertheless are able to find our way to eternal death without one thought at

all. Fearful truth, that it is *natural* for us to be lost! Let us only live on to the end *without thinking*, and we shall surely perish.

But though we can be *lost* without thinking, we cannot be *saved* without thinking. God tells us of wrath to come, and glory to come. He does not open to our bodily eyes the fire that shall never be quenched, and the glories of the heavenly world. He *tells* us about them, and tell us to think about them. He tells us we are lost. He shows us how, and why, and that if unchanged, we shall be lost for ever. He tells that we may be saved, and he shows us the way,—Christ, the way, the truth, the life. He calls us to think—to believe, to turn, to live for ever.

Reader! in the lonely cottage—on the bed of sickness—or while passing from place to place in the bustling city, do you sometimes ask, What shall I think about? *Think about these things*. It is good for us to improve the time, by connecting the things of the soul with the things we see, and the duties we do, in the world around us. The following is the manner in which a godly minister of other days used to teach his people to "redeem the time."

When I awake in the morning, let me think that the great Jehovah can and will as easily raise our mortal bodies at the general resurrection, as my frail body now. This sleep is the image of death. Death is but a sleep; the grave my bed; the resurrection the morning. Oh that, when I awake, I may be still with God! and then at my last awaking I "shall be satisfied with his likeness."

When I see the morning sky, or rising sun, let me think: "Truly light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun." Blessed be God who hath set this light, by which poor mortals may seek to walk or work! What a dark

dungeon would this world be without it! But oh, the blessed mercy we have in the light of the glorious gospel, without which we should be in the darkness of ignorance, and go into utter darkness!

When I pray in my chamber, let me think: Now my Father in heaven sees me in secret. Darkness or privacy hides not from him. Oh for an upright frame of spirit! Oh that my heart were now devoted for God all this day! The Searcher of hearts will have his eye upon me whithersoever I go. Oh that I could set the Lord in my sight in all places, companies, and occasions.

When a family is together, let me think: How sadly and suddenly might a breach have been made! Oh that God should make this image of death a means of life! We are alive, that is rich mercy; we are in health, that is more; we are called together, so will God gather his saints together. How many of this family shall be of this number? Lord grant that none under my charge may be an Ishmael, or an Esau! Oh that we may all meet in heaven!

When I am travelling by the way, let me think: My life is a journey; I am in constant motion towards eternity. Every action is another step. Is heaven my home? Lord, let me not miss my way; take me by the hand, support me by thy Spirit, keep me from fainting, give me some good provision by the way, and bring me to the end of my faith at last, even the salvation of my soul.

When I am discoursing with others, let me think: Of every idle word I must give an account, and in a multitude of words there wanteth not sin. O my soul, think twice, before thou speak once, Will this be to the glory of God, and the edification of others?

When I am alone, let me think: I am now in the presence of the omni-

present God. These are precious hours that go over my head. Why should I squander away my time and thoughts about trifles? O my soul, thou hast a noble faculty of reflection; find work at home. When thou hast no creature to converse with, my soul, converse with God.

When I am busy in my particular calling, let me think: Who sets me to work? is it not God? Whom do I work for? is it not for God? Do I seek myself, or strive to grow rich? then am I not carnal? O my soul, be moderate in the pursuit of the world. Let not the cares of the world overwhelm thee. Drive on evenly, both thy general and particular calling. Let nothing interpose between thy God and thee, or hinder thee in spiritual worship. Abide with God in thy calling.

When I hear any news, good or bad, let me think too of the blessed tidings in the gospel. Good news from heaven—"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men:" the best message that ever angel brought, or men received! Let God say that he is my salvation, I am fortified against bad news; the righteous is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in God.

When I hear or see the sinful acts of men, let me think: Oh, what are the best of us by nature! Who makes me to differ? Free grace stops my course, else I had been reeling with the drunkard, blaspheming with the swearer, revelling with the wanton. Lord, let me not pride myself in morality. Never leave me to the ways of mine own heart. Ah! how is God dishonoured! what long-suffering doth he exercise! But justice will awake.

When my own corruptions break out, let me think: Oh the vileness of this evil heart! oh, wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Little did I think to have been thus beguiled

and surprised. God is just, and I am vile; I have grown secure, and God has left me. Oh, how justly might he have taken me in the act of sin, and cast me headlong into hell!

When I find any sad crosses befall me in body, estate, name, or relations, let me think: For what sin is it that God now chastens me? My soul, search thy heart and ways; this stroke of God is either a token of his love, or the beginning of his wrath. Oh that I may see a Father's heart, and feel a Father's hand, and attain my Father's end therein!

When I am delivered out of apparent danger of death by sickness or sad accident, think: O my soul, what if thou hadst been snatched away, and thy body left a mass of corruption! Where hadst thou been? Wast thou ready for glory? What assurance hast thou of a better state? Didst thou not wish thou hadst been better prepared?

When night approaches, and the spacious sky is full of stars, let me think: There is one day more of my life now past and gone. I am thus far nearer eternity. Lord, set up the candle of thy grace in my soul, in this night of darkness, error, and dismay. Show me the light of life. Let the blessed Day-Star arise in my heart! Oh, when shall my soul shine as a star in the firmament of glory!

When I put off my clothes, and go to bed, let me think: Thus, even thus, must thou, my soul, put off thy body at death. When thou art unclothed, shalt thou be "clothed upon with a house from heaven"? O my soul, be daily undressing thee

of the body of sin. Give up thyself to sleep as thou wouldst be found at death, or when raised at the great day of resurrection.

Reader, thus let the things of time teach you the lessons of eternity.

Are you a follower of Christ? Have you a good hope through grace that in him you have found redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins? Then seek thus to turn all things into gold. Seek so to consecrate your everyday calling, and all the duties of life, to the Lord, that you shall find in them, not only no cause of hardening, but a constant, precious occasion and means of grace.

Are you yet in your sins? Then listen to the voice by which, in all these objects and duties, God is calling you to awake, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life. Pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that you may be kept in mind, by all you see around you, that now is the day of salvation. And specially when the Sabbath comes, waste not your hours in sloth. Let the sight of a church, the sound of a Sabbath-bell, be a voice in your ears, telling you that once more an ambassador has come from the King to proclaim an offer of free pardon to rebel sinners,—to beseech *you*, in Christ's stead, dear reader, to be reconciled unto God. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

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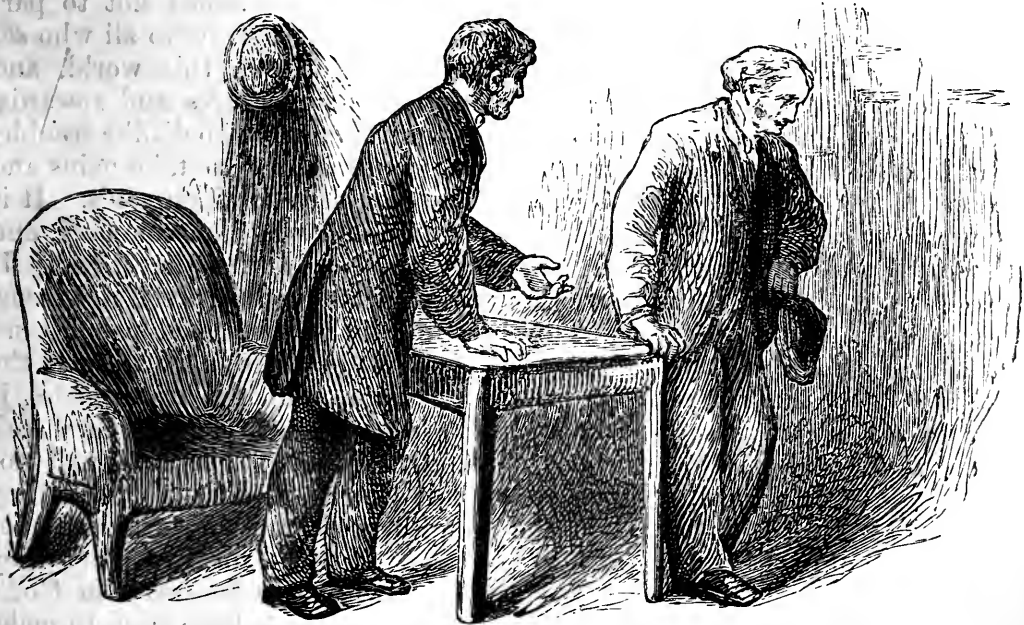
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1882.

"STRAIT IS THE GATE."

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—LUKE xiii. 24.



THERE was once a man who asked our Lord Jesus Christ a very deep question. He said to him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Who this man was we do not know. What his motive was for asking this question we are not told. Perhaps he wished to gratify an idle curiosity; perhaps he wanted an excuse for not seeking salvation himself. But one thing is very clear, and that is the vast importance of the saying of our Lord to which the question gave rise. Jesus seized the opportunity to direct the minds of all around him to their own plain duty. He knew the train of thought which the man's inquiry had set moving in

their hearts ; he saw what was going on within them. "Strive," he cries, "to enter in at the strait gate." Whether there be few saved or many, *your* course is clear,—“Strive to enter in. Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. A day shall come when many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Strive to enter in now.”

Here is a description of the way of salvation. Jesus calls it "*the strait gate*."

There is a gate which leads to pardon, peace with God, and heaven. Whosoever goes in by that gate shall be saved. Never, surely, was a gate more needed. Sin is a vast mountain between man and God. How shall man climb over it? Sin is a high wall between man and God. How shall man get through it? Sin is a deep gulf between man and God. How shall man cross over it? God is in heaven, holy, pure, spiritual, undefiled, light without any darkness at all, a being who cannot bear that which is evil or look upon iniquity. Man is a poor fallen worm, crawling on earth for a few years,—sinful, corrupt, erring, defective,—a being whose imagination is only evil, and whose heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. How shall man and God be brought together? How shall man ever draw near to his Maker without fear and shame? Blessed be God, there is a way! There is a road. There is a path. There is a door. It is the gate spoken of in the words of Christ: "the strait gate."

This gate was *made for sinners by the Lord Jesus Christ*. From all eternity he covenanted and engaged that he would make it. In the fullness of time he came into the world and made it, by his own atoning death on the cross. By that he made satisfaction for man's sin, paid man's debt to God, and bore man's punishment. He built a great gate, at the

cost of his own body and blood. He reared a ladder on earth whose top reached to heaven. He made a door by which the chief of sinners may enter into the holy presence of God, and not be afraid. He opened a road by which the vilest of men, believing in him, may draw near to God and have peace. He cries to us, "I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John x. 9). "I am the way : no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John xiv. 6). "By Him," says Paul, "we have boldness and access with confidence" (Eph. iii. 12). Thus was the gate of salvation formed.

This gate is called *the strait gate*, and it is not called so without cause. It is *always* strait, narrow, and difficult to pass through to some persons, and it will be so as long as the world stands. It is narrow to all who love sin, and are determined not to part with it. It is narrow to all who set their affections on this world, and seek first its pleasures and rewards. It is narrow to all who dislike trouble, and are unwilling to take pains and make sacrifices for their souls. It is narrow to all who like company, and want to keep in with the crowd. It is narrow to all who are self-righteous, and think they are good people, and deserve to be saved. To all such, the great gate, which Christ made, is narrow and strait. In vain they seek to pass through. The gate will not admit them. God is not unwilling to receive them; their sins are not too many to be forgiven; but they are not willing to be saved in God's way. Thousands have tried to make the gateway wider; thousands have worked and toiled to get to heaven on lower terms. But the gate never alters. It will not stretch to accommodate one man more than another. It is still the strait gate.

Reader, strait as this gate is, it is *the only one by which men can get to heaven*. There is no side door; there

is no bye-path ; there is no gap or low place in the wall. All that are ever saved will be saved only by Christ, and only by simple faith in him.—Not one will be saved by repentance. To-day's sorrow does not wipe off yesterday's score.—Not one will be saved by his own works. The best works that any man can do are little better than splendid sins.—Not one will be saved by his formal regularity in the use of the outward means of grace. When we have done all, we are poor, unprofitable servants. Oh, no ! it is mere waste of time to seek any other road to eternal life. Men may look right and left, and weary themselves with their own devices, but they will never find another door. Proud men may dislike the gate, if they will. Profligate men may scoff at it, and make a jest of those who use it. Lazy men may complain that the way is hard. But men will discover no other salvation than that of faith in the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer. There stands between you and heaven the great gate : it may be strait ; but it is the only one. We must either enter heaven by the strait gate, or not at all.

Strait as this gate is, it is *a gate ever ready to open*. No sinners of any kind are forbidden to draw near : whosoever will may enter in, and be saved. There is but one condition of admission : that condition is that you really feel your sins, and desire to be saved by Christ in his own way. Art thou really sensible of thy guilt and vileness ? Hast thou a truly broken and contrite heart ? Behold the gate of salvation, and come in. He that made it declares, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). The question to be considered is not whether you are a great sinner or a little sinner, —whether you are elect or not,—whether you are converted or not : the question is simply this, "Do you

feel your sins ? Do you feel labouring and heavy-laden ? Are you willing to put your soul into Christ's hand ?" Then if that be the case, the gate will open to you at once. Come in this very day. Wherefore standest thou without ?

Strait as this gate is, it is *one through which thousands have gone in and been saved*. No sinner was ever turned back, and told he was too bad to be admitted, if he came really sick of his sins. Thousands of all sorts have been received, cleansed, washed, pardoned, clothed, and made heirs of eternal life. Some of them seemed very unlikely to be admitted ; you and I might have thought they were too bad to be saved. But he that built the gate did not refuse them. As soon as they knocked, he gave orders that they should be let in.

Saul the Pharisee went up to this gate. He had been a great offender. He had been a blasphemer of Christ, and a persecutor of Christ's people. He had laboured hard to stop the progress of the gospel. But as soon as his heart was touched, and he found out his own guilt and fled to the gate for pardon, at once the gate flew wide open, and he was saved.

Many 'of the Jews who crucified our Lord went up to this gate. They had been grievous sinners indeed. They had refused and rejected their own Messiah. They had delivered him to Pilate, and entreated that he might be slain. They had desired Barabbas to be let go, and the Son of God to be crucified. But in the day when they were pricked to the heart by Peter's preaching, they fled to the gate for pardon, and at once the gate flew open and they were saved.

The jailor at Philippi went up to this gate. He had been a cruel, hard, godless man. He had done all in his power to ill-treat Paul and his companion. He had thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But when his

conscience was aroused by the earthquake, and his mind enlightened by Paul's teaching, he fled to the gate for pardon, and at once the gate flew open and he was saved.

But why need I stop short in Bible examples? Why should I not say that multitudes have gone to the strait gate since the days of the apostles, and have entered in by it and been saved? Thousands of all ranks, classes, and ages,—learned and unlearned, rich and poor, old and young, have tried the gate and found it ready to open,—have gone through it and found peace to their souls. Yes! thousands of persons yet living have made proof of the gate, and found it the way to real happiness. Noblemen and commoners, merchants and bankers, soldiers and sailors, farmers and tradesmen, labourers and workmen, are still upon earth, who have found the strait gate to be a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. They have not brought up an evil report of the country inside. They have found Christ's yoke to be easy, and his burden to be light. Their only regret has been that so few enter in, and that they themselves did not enter in before.

Reader, this is the gate which I want every one to enter, into whose hand this tract may fall. I want you not merely to go to church or chapel, but to go with heart and soul to the gate of life. I want you not merely to believe there is such a gate, and to think it a good thing, but to enter by faith, and be saved.

And now let me ask every one who reads this tract a plain question.

Have you entered in at the strait gate, or not? Old or young, rich or poor, I repeat my question, Have you entered in at the strait gate?

I ask not whether you have heard of it, and believe there is a gate. I ask not whether you have looked at it, and admired it, and hope one day to go in. I ask whether you have gone up to it, knocked at it, been admitted, and *are now inside?*

If you are not inside, what good have you got from your religion? You are not pardoned and forgiven. You are not reconciled to God. You are not born again, sanctified, and meet for heaven. If you die as you are, the devil will have you for ever, and your soul will be eternally miserable.

Oh, think, think what a state this is to live in! Think, think above all things, what a state this is to die in! A few more years at most and you are gone. Your house will be occupied by another. The sun will go on shining; the grass and daisies will soon grow thick over your grave; your body will be food for worms, and your soul will be lost to all eternity.

And all this time there stands open before you a gate of salvation. God invites you. Jesus Christ offers to save you. All things are ready for your deliverance. One thing only is wanting, and that is that you should be willing to be saved.

Oh, reader, think of these things, and be wise!

BISHOP RYLE.

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OCTOBER 1882.

"OLD WILLIAM:"

A MEDICAL MISSION STORY.



See page 2.

VIEWED from either of the lofty bridges which span it, the Cowgate of Edinburgh looks like a vast gloomy trench, with human swarms moving about on the bottom. Numerous "closes," or narrow lanes, open into the trench, almost low and dark enough to be the passages of a mine. Up one of these closes, so narrow that two persons could not walk abreast,

was the Medical Mission Dispensary, where we laboured for many years, and which was known in many parts of the world as "*Dear old 39.*"

The door by which we entered was once the back door of an extinct whisky shop. Turning to the left, we found ourselves in a low room, poorly lighted by a window half sunk under the level of the back court.

In this little room, day by day, assembled a motley group of sick and suffering ones for a short religious service, which always in medical missions precedes the examination of the individual cases.

One day, when leaving the waiting-room, after addressing the patients, a timid, shrinking young woman touched us on the arm, and asked, in a voice scarcely audible through the ravages of consumption, if she might speak with us privately. This request was readily granted. She desired to interest us in her father, who was living "without God and without hope." Religion he had long neglected and despised. For forty years he had "never darkened a kirk door." His pious, meek, heart-broken wife, for some time during her life, got a missionary to conduct a prayer meeting in one of her rooms, in the hope that her husband would, on some occasions at least, consent to be present; but in this she was disappointed. Every meeting-night he was out of the way. According to the phrase common in this district, he had long taken a "heavy glass," which just meant that he was given up to intemperance. The little money he earned during the week was spent on the Saturday evening on intoxicating drinks; and he used, on these occasions, when returning home, to go up his narrow wooden stair stamp—stamp—stamping, and pausing after each tramp to pour forth oaths and blasphemies that made one's blood run cold. Such was his character,—a drunkard, a blasphemer, and injurious.

When we at length met him personally, his appearance was far from prepossessing. He had a bullet-shaped head, with a short thick neck; and as he had been much exposed to all kinds of weather from his calling as a street-layer, rheumatism had worked hard upon him, and had given him one or two twists that in no way contributed to his gainliness. When he spoke, it

was in a hard, abrupt, sententious way, that was not attractive. Such was old William when we first saw him.

He was very suspicious of us, for we bore the hated name of "Missionary." But continued kindness to his sick daughter, whom he sincerely loved when he was sober, gradually softened the heart of the old man, and removed his uneasiness respecting us; and at length, in response to the repeated and gentle pleadings of the nurse, he consented to come to our Sabbath evening prayer meeting. This was a great step in his eyes; but it did not involve so much respect for religion, he thought, to go and hear a doctor, as if he had gone to hear a minister. Besides, he felt quite convinced there was less risk of being caught, (he had quite a horror at the thought of being "*caught*,") when listening to a physician, than if he were listening to a clergyman.

That night we spoke from the beautiful story of Naaman the leper, dwelling chiefly on the command to wash and be clean—to believe and live. It was listened to by the old man with earnest attention. It seemed as if a gleam of sunshine from the upper sanctuary had been let in upon his darkened soul, and he went home with no small measure of happiness. The truth had taken possession of him—had *caught* him, he could not shake it off; indeed, he had no wish to do so, for it was making him happy. When the nurse called next day to inquire after the daughter, but also to ascertain how he had liked the meeting, she found him rocking to and fro in his chair, and heard him muttering to himself, "Believe! believe! just believe!" Then, his eye catching her as she advanced, he cried, "Oh, come awa', woman, I never was as happy as this a' my life."

This happiness lasted only two

days, and was followed by a sense of sin and guilt that was truly terrible. Many a time he came to my little room, and, throwing himself on the carpet, wept out his heart before God, muttering at intervals, "A God of love! a God of love! I have been sinning all my life against a God of love!" At other times the burden of his anguish was breathed out thus: "And *that's* the God I've been sinning against! I thought he was a hard man." He could seldom go further, for sobs choked his utterance and convulsed his rigid frame. Yes, that was the God he had sinned against,—a God who "so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

When William's heart was touched by the divine Spirit, and he began to see himself in the light of truth, how the thought crushed him, almost overwhelmed him, that he had been sinning against *love*. He abhorred himself, repenting in dust and ashes. Oft have I sat here, looking down on that aged sinner weeping beside my chair, and have thought how real is sin! how real and how solemn the work of the divine Spirit on a human soul in conversion!

It was long ere William found rest to his burdened spirit. One night, as the nurse was panting up his stair with a huge load of chaff for the bed, a remark was made about the weight of her burden. "Ah," he said, "she'll soon get rid of her burden, but when shall I get rid of mine?" During the long period of his anxiety, the sunshine that at first lit up his soul was of great service in keeping him from despair. His distress was not *so much* from apprehension that the Lord would utterly consign him for ever to merited punishment, as from deep self-loathing, and an inexpressible sense of shame and sorrow, that he should have

sinned so long against such a God. One remark in the address about the healing waters greatly impressed him, and often came to his aid in his struggles with unbelief: it was to the effect, that the water was as good and as efficacious to heal, even at the time when the leper was turning from it in a rage, as when, in obedience to the prophet, he was dipping in it and testing its power. He shuddered to think of poor Naaman going away with his loathsome and deadly disease clinging to him, without at least giving a trial to the simple remedy proposed. The application to his own case was not difficult. The precious atoning blood did not change in its value or efficacy with his changing views and feelings respecting it. Even during his questionings and doubts, the soul-quickening words, "Believe and live," stood forth unchanging and unchangeable in their glorious simplicity and worth; and when at length he was enabled to lay his head on the bosom of Jesus and rest,—yea, *rest*,—how pregnant to him with meaning were *now* the words with which his new history began, "Believe—just believe—believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

The change was deep and abiding, and affected heart and life. He at once and for ever gave up his drinking habits, and an oath was never again heard from his lips. The daily fight with his own heart was very hard; but forgiven much, he loved much, and struggled bravely against remaining corruption.

One of the first indications of the new life William had received, was a tender and prayerful concern for the conversion of his daughter. She had always lived a moral life, and had even made a respectable profession of religion; but the quickened spiritual perception of the father soon led him to discover that his child was, at heart, a stranger to Jesus and his

blessed work of atonement,—that she had only a name to live, whilst she was dead. It was very interesting to note this revolution: at first the daughter came to me to weep over the ungodliness of the father; and now the father comes to weep over the spiritual deadness of his child!

Old William was now regular in his attendance on the means of grace; and when the communion season came round, he expressed his desire to enjoy this privilege of the children of God, and to join the church at that time nursed in the Magdalene Chapel,—a quaint old building, wherein had been held the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Satisfied that William had been born again, his desire, without hesitation, we encouraged; and, after the usual appearances before the minister and kirk-session, he received his “token” of admission. The “elements” were placed on the table where centuries before had been laid the remains of the martyred Argyle. When we had received the “cup of blessing,” we turned to place it in the hands of the disciples. Imagine our feelings on discovering that the first to take it from us was our friend old William, who was communicating, for the first time, when seventy years of age.

Whom the Lord loveth, he loveth to the end. The last illness of our friend was lingering: sometimes the pain was hard to bear, but he was enabled not to murmur; and, on the whole, he was very happy,—his latter end was peace. One of my young missionaries, who happened to be

present when we called, writes:—“How patient and contented he is! It is hard to believe that the soft, gentle voice you now hear was once spent in cursing and blaspheming God. Yet so it was. He asked me to come as often as I could. It must cheer you very much in your work to hear such words as these coming from the lips of one on the borders of eternity: ‘Ah, Christ has been kind, kind to me; he has been showing me strange things since I lay down here. I bless God for ever being led to the Dispensary; and my prayer is, that every one that goes may find what I have found. Ah, doctor, you have been a good friend to me—both to my soul and to my body; but now I am going home. I’m going home to be with Jesus.’”

Not to us evangelists only has this brief narrative a voice. It gives a sweet commentary on the precious truth, uttered at first by the Pharisees in mockery, “This man receiveth sinners.” Yes, answers old William,—the worst of sinners, aged, confirmed, hardened sinners. Reader, if still unsaved, he will receive you! will receive you to his heart *now*, and to his home *hereafter*. He will take *you*: will you take *him*? “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.” (Hebrews iii. 15.)

“Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews vii. 25.)

Dr. W. Burns Thomson.

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"WHAT THING IS THIS?"

(MARK i. 27.)



See page 2.

AMONG the many meetings held in Glasgow during the recent visit of Mr. D. L. Moody, few were more remarkable than the gatherings in the large circus near the High Street. Night after night, for several months, men and women, young and old, sought and found the Saviour. "It was noised in the city that Jesus was there," and many a poor sinful soul,

tired of sin and of Satan's hard service, came there to hear of Christ. The oft-repeated hymn, "Come, Great Deliverer, come!" was the cry of many hearts. One evening when, as frequently happened, the circus was crowded in every part long before the hour of meeting, a gentleman stood outside among the disappointed people who could

not gain admittance to the building. "Now," said he, "the circus is crowded, but we will try to make room somehow for those of you men here who have come wanting *to be saved*. Who of you have come for that?" A man pressed forward through the crowd towards him. "I want to be saved," said he, "I came for that;" and immediately several young men stepped up beside him. Salvation is not far off from those who have, like these men, made up their minds that they *need* to be saved. Why is it that so many people, —perhaps, reader, you are one,—acknowledge with their lips that they need salvation from Jesus Christ, and that they have "no other to look to," and who yet just remain where they are—they do not trust him to save them? Why should it be so? Come *now*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved."

Let us go to one of the afternoon meetings in the circus. The preacher comes forward to the edge of the low circular platform, and looks round on his audience as he announces his text. It is the story of the Prodigal Son, and there are many there who look as if they knew something of the "far country"—men, grown grey in sin,—women, homeless and unwomanly,—young men already going the way of the prodigal. But among them there are those who have returned to the Father's house, and who can gladly testify what that Father's love is to them, and what his welcome was. The preacher goes on; he describes the younger son's early days, his leaving home, his downward career, and he appeals to the experience of his hearers if the way of sin is not *hard*. He pictures the Father's long waiting, his longing for his boy, his prayers, his willingness to forgive and to welcome. "Now," he exclaims, "is there not one here to-day who will say, 'I will

arise and go to my Father'?" Half the battle is fought on that ground of *the will*. Who is there here who will say now, '*I will* arise and go to my Father'?" He pauses for a reply, and there is deep silence; but the silence is soon broken. A sturdy working-man springs to his feet, and, throwing up his arm with a quick motion, he cries firmly, "By the grace of God, *I will* arise and go to my Father!" Then, dropping into his seat again, he buries his face in his hands. Another and another rise, declaring that same resolution, and in silence they are commended to God. Then the preacher finishes his address, and the invitation to return is repeated in the song, "Come home, O come home." There was joy in the Father's house that day, and joy in hearts on earth.

Has there been joy over *you*, wandering one? It is not enough to *intend* to come back to the Father. It is not enough to *know* that there is bread enough and to spare. It is not enough to *feel miserable*, and to lament your sad condition in the far country. That will not bring you *home*. You must *arise*, and *come*, if you are to reach the Father's house, and receive his welcome. "O prodigal child! come home! come home!"

Day after day, in those afternoon meetings, special prayer went up to God for the deliverance of the slaves of strong drink,—that "overflowing scourge" which is the misery and the shame of our country. And there was nothing more remarkable in the whole movement than the manner in which those prayers were answered. In hundreds of cases, remorse for the guilt of drunkenness seems to have been made the means of awakening the sinner to a sense of his lost condition. At a meeting held on 6th June last, before Mr. Moody left Glasgow, *nearly a thousand men* were present "who had been given to

drink, but had given it up for Christ's sake."

Let us go again to the evening meeting. The row of bright lamps outside light up a crowd waiting, long before the hour of meeting. When the doors are opened the people stream in, and soon the large building is filled. After a good deal of singing, the preacher began, and is eagerly listened to, as he earnestly and lovingly holds up Christ, the sinner's Saviour. By such familiar illustrations as the following the great truth is pressed home, that God loves the sinner, though he hates the sinner's sin; and that he is willing to receive any sinner who forsakes his sin and accepts the offered Saviour. "Once," said the speaker, naming a town in the north of England, "I saw in the after-meeting a poor woman sitting weeping, and in the deepest distress. I went to her, and said, 'My friend, are you a Christian?' 'Oh yes,' she said. 'Then what troubles you?' 'Oh,' she said, 'I don't know what I am to do. I am a poor, helpless widow; and I have one boy who ought to be a great help to me, but instead of working, he loafs about the public-house, gambling and drinking. A week ago they told me that unless I turned him to the door they would take away the two shillings a-week I have from the parish; and that is all I have to live upon. It was hard to do, and I pleaded with him to give up his bad ways, but he would not; and so one dark stormy night when he came home, drunk as usual, I turned him from the door. He went round the house, and got into the back-yard, and sat down there. All night, through the howling of the wind, I could hear the hollow cough of my poor boy, for he is not strong. At last I could stand it no longer; I got up and opened the door and went out to him, and I put my arms round him, and I said, 'Johnnie, come in! They may put us both out, but

we'll go together!' That mother hated her boy's ways, but she loved her boy. And so it is with you, sinner. God hates *your sin*, but he loves *you*."

A Christian worker was asked by a friend to see a young woman who had been awakened to a sense of her need of Christ the Saviour. He wrote to her, and invited her to come to the circus meeting, saying he would be at the place early, and talk with her before the meeting began instead of after it. She came, very anxious to know how to be saved, but she had only a few minutes to stay, as she had to return to her work, and could not wait for the meeting. They stood in the corridor, and as the people were hurrying past into the main building, the friend pointed out the way of salvation. As he told her that Jesus Christ died that we might live, that he bore our sin that we might have no wrath to bear, that he gives us his robe of righteousness instead of our own "filthy rags," she was enabled to believe the glad tidings, and trusted the Lord to save her. She had not to make a way to God for herself. Jesus had done that long ago. She had only to accept what was already provided for her use. Before the hour of meeting came, the young woman had to go back to her work; but she went rejoicing in a new-found Saviour. §

That great circus in Glasgow, with its brilliant lights, its scarlet draperies, its strange decorations, will be a hallowed place to hundreds, who there found the Saviour. But all who came there did not believe. There were some who were hindered by their having too much religion of their own. Like Naaman, they had their own thoughts about how they were to be saved, and so they turned and went away as they came; for God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. Some did not want their friends to think they needed to

be converted, and so they went away, ashamed of Jesus. Some could not give up their favourite sins. The wages of sin are hardly earned, and they are poor payment in the end, but these wanted *sin* instead of the *Saviour*. So they also went away unsaved. And what will the end be? But through the grace of God, there were many who came confessing and forsaking their sins, and who went away truly trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, who "came into the world to save sinners." Of these, every one, can it be doubted that they were saved? For he has promised, and he will never go back from his promise, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

One of the most memorable features of that great work in Glasgow was the remarkable power and rapidity with which the great change appeared to be wrought in the hundreds upon hundreds who seemed to be the subjects of it. The great mass to whose good the efforts were specially directed, consisted of those who had nothing which could even be mistaken for a profession of religion. Their characters, their very appearance, made it too manifest that their lives hitherto had lain all the other way. Hence, perhaps, it was made the more manifest that the gospel, when it came to them, was "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." Stript of all refuge,—shown that in God's sight they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,"—it came to be more simply a question of accept-

ing or refusing. CHRIST, in all the fulness of his grace,—not only for pardon, but for strength to overcome sin,—Christ *now*,—Christ *for nothing*,—these, held forth, believed in, and accepted, were experienced to be the power of God unto salvation. Of the lasting fruits, of course time only can tell; for they that "endure to the end," and they only, "shall be saved." But so far as it has yet been tested, that work of grace in Glasgow may be regarded, in all the circumstances, as one of the most remarkable spiritual movements in recent times.

Reader! the year 1882 will soon be gone. It has been a year of blessing to many; perhaps to some of your own friends. How does it affect you to think of twelve months of opportunities,—gone for ever? twelve months wherein *you* might have turned to God,—twelve months of gospel-hearing,—twelve months of warnings? The years are slipping past, and you will soon be at the end, looking out into the future. Saved,—or unsaved,—which are you? It is a question that bears on eternity, therefore it demands an answer. Saved, because Jesus died? or unsaved, *because you will not come to him?* Will you not rather take up the words of the hymn, often sung at these meetings, and much blessed,—

"Jesus, my Lord, to thee I cry!
Unless thou help me, I must die:
O bring thy free salvation nigh,
And take me as I am!

No preparation can I make;
My best resolves I only break;
Yet save me for thine own name's sake,
And take me as I am."

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1883.

"THIS YEAR ALSO."

LUKE xiii. 8.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



AT the opening of another year, we earnestly desire to utter the word of exhortation. Our desire is to speak with living words, or not at all.

The vine-dresser pleaded for the fruitless fig-tree, "Let it alone *this year also*," dating as it were a year from the time wherein he spoke.

Trees and fruitbearing plants have a natural measurement for their lives: evidently a year came to its close when it was time to seek fruit on the fig-tree, and another year commenced when the vine-dresser began again his digging and pruning work. Men are such barren things that their

fruitage marks no certain periods, and it becomes needful to make artificial divisions of time for them; there seems to be no set period for man's spiritual harvest or vintage, or if there be, the sheaves and the clusters come not in their season, and hence we have to say one to another—"This shall be the beginning of a new year." Be it so, then. Let us congratulate each other upon seeing the dawn of "this year also," and let us unitedly pray that we may enter upon it, continue in it, and come to its close under the unfailing blessing of the Lord to whom all years belong.

I. The beginning of a new year SUGGESTS A RETROSPECT. Let us take it, deliberately and honestly. "*This year also*:"—then there had been former years of grace. The dresser of the vineyard was not for the first time aware of the fig-tree's failure, neither had the owner come for the first time seeking figs in vain. God, who gives us "this year also," has given us others before it; his sparing mercy is no novelty, his patience has already been taxed by our provocations. First came our *youthful* years, when even a little fruit unto God is peculiarly sweet to him. How did we spend them? Did our strength run all into wild wood? If so, we may well bewail that wasted vigour, that life misspent, that sin exceedingly multiplied. He who saw us misuse those golden months of youth nevertheless affords us "this year also," and we should enter upon it with a holy jealousy, lest what of strength and ardour may be left to us should be allowed to run away into the same wasteful courses as aforetime.

Upon the heels of our youthful years came those of *early manhood*, when we began to muster a household, and to become as a tree fixed in its place; then also fruit would have been precious. Did we bear any? Did we present unto the Lord a basket of summer fruit? Did we offer him

the firstling of our strength? If we did so, we may well adore the grace which so early saved us; but if not, the past chides us, and warns us not to let "this year also" follow the way of the rest of our lives. He who has wasted youth and the morning of manhood has surely had enough of fooling. The time past may well suffice him to have wrought the will of the flesh. It will be a superfluity of naughtiness to suffer "this year also" to be trodden down in the service of sin.

Many of us are now in the *prime of life*, and our years already spent are not few. Have we still need to confess that our years are eaten up by the grasshopper and the canker-worm? Have we reached the half-way house, and still know not whither we are going? Are we fools at forty? Are we half a century old, and yet far off from years of discretion? Alas, great God, that there should be men past this age who are still without knowledge! Unsaved at sixty, unregenerate at seventy, unawakened at eighty, unrenewed at ninety! These are each and all startling. Yet, peradventure, they will each one fall upon ears which they should make to tingle, but they will hear them as though they heard them not. Continuance in evil breeds callousness of heart; and when the soul has long been sleeping in indifference, it is hard to arouse it from the deadly slumber.

The sound of the words "this year also" makes some of us remember *years of great mercy*, sparkling and flashing with delight. Were those years laid at the Lord's feet? They were comparable to the silver bells upon the horses;—were they "holiness unto the Lord"? If not, how shall we answer for it if "this year also" should be musical with mercy and yet be spent in the ways of carelessness? The same words recall to some of us our *years of sharp affliction*. How went those years? God was

doing great things for us, exercising careful and expensive husbandry, caring for us with exceeding great and wise care;—did we render according to the benefit received? Did we rise from the bed more patient and gentle, more weaned from the world, more welded to Christ? Did we bring forth clusters to reward the dresser of the vineyard? Let us not refuse these questions of self-examination, for it may be this is to be another of these years of captivity, another season of the furnace and the fining-pot. The Lord grant that the coming tribulation may take more chaff out of us than any of its predecessors, and leave the wheat cleaner and better.

The new year also reminds us of *opportunities for usefulness*, which have come and gone, and of *unfulfilled resolutions*, which have blossomed only to fade; shall "this year also" be as those which have gone before? May we not hope for grace to advance upon grace already gained, and should we not seek for power to turn our poor sickly promises into robust action?

Looking back on the past, we lament the follies by which we would not willingly be held captive "this year also," and we adore the forgiving love of which, "this year also," we hope to be partakers.

II. The text MENTIONS A MERCY. It was in great goodness that the tree which cumbered the soil was allowed to stand for another year; and prolonged life should always be regarded as a boon of mercy. We must view "this year also" as a grant from infinite grace. It is wrong to speak as if we cared nothing for life, and looked upon our being here as an evil or a punishment; we are here "this year also" as the result of love's pleadings, and in pursuance of love's designs.

The wicked man should count that the Lord's long-suffering points to his

salvation, and he should permit the cords of love to draw him to it. Oh that the Holy Spirit would make the blasphemer, the Sabbath-breaker, and the openly vicious to feel what a wonder it is that their lives are prolonged "this year also"! Are they spared,—to curse, and riot, and defy their Maker? Shall this be the only fruit of patient mercy? The procrastinator who has put off the messenger of heaven with his delays and half promises, ought he not to wonder that he is allowed to see "this year also"? Is this year of grace to be spent in the same manner? Transient impressions, hasty resolves, and speedy apostasies,—are these to be the weary story over and over again? The startled conscience, the tyrant passion, the smothered emotion? Are these to be the tokens of yet another year?

May God forbid that any one of us should hesitate and delay through "this year also." Infinite pity holds back the axe of justice; shall it be insulted by the repetition of the sins which caused the uplifting of the instrument of wrath? What can be more tantalizing to the heart of goodness than indecision? Well might the Lord's prophet become impatient, and cry, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Well may God himself push for a decision, and demand an immediate reply. O undecided soul, wilt thou swing much longer between heaven and hell, and act as if it were hard to choose between the slavery of Satan, and the liberty of the great Father's home of love? "This year also" wilt thou sport in defiance of justice, and pervert the generosity of mercy into a licence for still further rebellion? "This year also" must divine love be made an occasion for continued sin? Oh do not act so basely, so contrary to every noble instinct, so injuriously to thine own best interests!

The believer is kept out of heaven "this year also" in love, and not in anger. There are some for whose sake it is needful he should abide in the flesh, some to be helped by him on their heavenward way, and others to be led to the Redeemer's feet by his instruction. The heaven of many saints is not yet prepared for them, because their nearest companions have not yet arrived, and their spiritual children have not yet gathered in glory in sufficient number; they must wait "this year also" that their rest may be the more glorious, and that the sheaves which they will bring with them may afford them greater joy. Surely, for the sake of souls, for the delight of glorifying our Lord, and for the increase of the jewels of our crown, we may be glad to wait below "this year also."

III. The expression, "This year also," IMPLIES A LIMIT. The vine-dresser asked no longer a reprieve than one year. If his digging and manuring should not then prove successful, he would plead no more, but the tree should fall. Even when Jesus is the pleader, the request of mercy has its bounds and times. It is not for ever that we shall be let alone, and allowed to cumber the ground. If we will not repent, we must perish. If we will not be benefited by the spade, we must fall by the axe. *There will come a last year to each one of us:* therefore let each one say to himself—*Is this my last?* Dear friend, is "this year also" to be *your* last? Are you now prepared to hear the midnight cry, and to

enter in to the marriage-supper? The judgment, and all that will follow upon it, are most surely the heritage of every living man. Blessed are they who, by faith in Jesus, are able to face the bar of God without a thought of terror.

If we live to be counted among "the oldest inhabitants," we must depart at last. There must be an end, and the voice must be heard, "Thus saith the Lord, this year thou shalt die." So many have gone before us, and are going every hour, that no man should need any other reminder; and yet man is so eager to forget his own mortality, and thereby to forfeit his hopes of bliss, that we cannot too often bring it before the mind's eye. O mortal man, bethink thee! Prepare to meet thy God; for thou must meet him. Seek the Saviour, yea, seek him ere the setting of another sun.

Once more,—“this year also,” and it may be for this year only, the cross is uplifted as the light of the world, the one light to which no eye can look in vain. Oh that millions would look that way, and live! Soon the Lord Jesus will come a second time, and then the blaze of his throne will supplant the mild radiance of his cross. The Judge will be seen, rather than the Redeemer. Now he saves, but then he will destroy. Let us hear his voice at this moment. He hath limited a day. Let us be eager to avail ourselves of the gracious season. Let us believe in Jesus this day, seeing it may be our last.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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"YOU, ME, OR ANYBODY ELSE."



See page 3.

A FRIEND of mine was preaching in Hyde Park one Sunday afternoon, to a goodly number of its usual Sunday frequenters. As he was on the point of dismissing his audience, at the conclusion of his address, he was stopped by some one touching him on the arm. He turned round, and saw a man whose appearance and attire evidently

showed that he hailed "from the country"; and who, addressing the preacher, earnestly begged to be allowed to speak a word to the people, and tell them the story of his conversion, which had taken place but a few weeks before.

At first my friend demurred, knowing the prejudices of Londoners, and at the same time fearing the man

might undo the good impression already made. However, as he persisted in his request, and only asked for a few minutes' time, my friend thought, "Well, I can easily stop him if I find he is on the wrong tack;" so told him he might stand on the chair and say what was on his mind.

He spoke with a broad Eastern county accent; and this, with his happy face and heart-felt manner, secured him a riveted attention. His story was to the following effect:—

"The gentleman who has just spoke to you has give me leave to tell you what's in my heart, and has been there this few weeks past. I am a poor labouring man, and never being no scholar, you can't expect me to talk much grammar; so you'll excuse my simple way, and let me tell you how the Lord saved my soul.

"I was ploughing for my master, in a field beside the road, and just sat down agen the fence nearest to it, to have a bit of bread and cheese, the horses standing in the furrow at the headlands, when I sees a gentleman leaning over the gate looking out at the prospect. Presently he spies me, and comes across the gate to where I was sitting. He said it was a fine day, and I said it was so, 'with the blessing of God,' as we always says down in them parts,—not thinking nothing about God all the time. Howsomever, he pulls me up sharp, though in a kindly voice; says he—

"'Do you know the blessing of God in saving *your* soul?' It quite took me aback, and I says—

"'Of course we all wants to be saved, and hopes we shall afore we comes to die.' Then he spoke a great deal to me, as I never heard the likes in my life; about being born again, and all to that away.

Before he goes, he takes out a book and says—

"'I should like to give you this, and will you read this chapter where I turn the leaf down?' I thanked him with all my heart; but told him I was no scholar, never having had no book larning.

"'Well,' says he, 'never mind that; you get the first person you see that can read, to read this chapter to you.' So he left the book, and I never seen him from that time.

"After a bit, as I still sat on the bank, thinking in a dazed way of what I had been told, with my mind all in a muddle, I hears a boy coming lumping along home from school, whistling some tune to himself. Thinks I, he'll do! So I calls, 'Hey, boy! Come here!' He comes over. So I tells him to sit down, just there beside me, and read me out of a book a gentleman gave me.

"I axed him, 'Can you read?'

"'Aye can I, and write my own name tew.'

"He reads away, and I sits listening with all my might. He reads about a man what came to Jesus by night, and I never knew anything take such hold on me as them words did. I had often heard sarmons with fine long words, but these came right home to me; and I was wholly stammed when he read about being born again, for that was what the gentleman was saying to me before. Then I lost what he read for a bit, for thinking to myself, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.' Now I wanted to go to heaven, and I always thought if a man did the best he could, and paid his way, and loved his neighbour, what more could he do? and he would surely go to heaven at the end; but this floored me—this being born again—I was sure I wasn't *this*, though I didn't know rightly what it meant. I knew I ought to be dif-

ferent to what I was, but this seemed something beyond me, and didn't mean my being different in myself, *but out of myself* altogether, something straight from heaven; and I kept thinking these thoughts, and wondering, when I again caught up the boy reading; and the words he read so made my heart jump with the strange feeling that I had got it at last, and yet hadn't got it, and was frightened of losing it. I called out to him to stop, and read that last over again. As he read what he told me was the sixteenth verse, the light began to shine in on my heart, and I thought that is what being born again means, this explains it. I know now, it was the Holy Spirit of God through them words: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"Yet I couldn't half think it was for me; and there was one word that seemed to me the chief word, that I couldn't understand, so I axed the boy—

"'Can you tell me what that there word *whosoever* means? But he seemed to know it as little as myself, he looked this way and that, as boys do, but couldn't see the meaning nowhere: then he said—

"'I can't for the life of me tell you what it means.' But I wasn't to be put off, I was too anxious, so I urged him to think again.

"'You're such a good scholar, and can write your own name, surely you know what this word means?'

"'No,' he says, 'I don't know what it means,—unless it means *you, me, or anybody else.*'

"'Well,' says I, 'why didn't you say that at first? I can understand that easy enough. Now, read that verse over again, if you please, and put them words in, instead of the long one.' So he read over again,—

"'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *you, me, or anybody* else believing in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"I lifted up my heart, and thanked God there and then for such mercy to a sinner like me. His love was so wonderful, and those words made it all plain that it was *for me*. I got the boy to say the verse over and over again, walking by me as I went on with my ploughing, until I knew them myself as well. The rest of that afternoon my heart was singing for joy, and as I followed the plough up and down in the furrow, I kept repeating the words over to myself, getting fresh understanding of them every time.

"After I had baited my horses, and put them out in the yard for the night, I went home, and the first thing I says to my wife when I gets in was—

"'Wife! with the blessing of God—and I meant it this time—my fortune's made! For this very day I have received everlasting life.' She said, 'Thank God then, my prayers are answered!' She had been a Christian woman for a long time, and often had I given her sorrow through my ways.

"'But how did you come by it?'

"Then I read to her—or rather said it to her, though I opened the book—the 16th verse of the 3rd of John.

"I was so full of my new-found happiness, that as soon as I had my supper I felt I must go down and tell my mates the good news, thinking, of course, they'd be glad to hear it. We were accustomed to meet at the public, in the village street, called the 'Fleece,' and I think now it's a good name for such places, for it's just there a fellow does get properly fleeced, as I have proved many's the time. We used to meet there to talk all the gossip of the country—it

was a regular scandal shop. So I goes down there this night, with my Testament in my pocket. When I gets there, my mates, and the landlord especially, begin by crying out how late I am, that I must have something very good to tell, and so on. Then when they are quiet, I tells them what I telled my wife, and pulls out my Testament and says the verse to them :

“‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever—that means *you, me*, or *anybody else*—believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

“Well, they stared at me, but hadn’t a word to say; at last the landlord spoke up. I suppose he saw that if all came to this way of thinking there would be an end to his trade, so he says—

“‘Come, we don’t want any of that sort of cant here; we have enough of preaching on Sundays by larned men without your setting up to be so good.’ I answers him, ‘Is that the way it is, landlord? Well, it opens my eyes plain what the friendship of the world’s worth. I could come here and talk all manner of stuff about any one and anything, no matter how low, and drink till I was scarce able to find my way home, and I was welcome; but now that my soul is saved, I musn’t speak about that, nor about my Saviour,—then I can’t come here any more indeed. Here’s the three shillings I owe you, and good-bye. Old mates, I would to God you would take the word of Jesus, and thank him for it.’

But the more part laughed at me; only two, I believe—and thank God for them—gave any heed. One of them was a young chap who had been converted before, and me and my mates had drawn him back among us. He followed me out with tears in his eyes, and said, ‘Oh pray for me! I have dishonoured my Saviour, I have left him! Will he receive me back?’ And he did, as he ever will. That young man is rejoicing again in Christ. It was not that day only, but every day after, I spoke to my neighbours and friends, wherever I could get them, of Jesus, ‘that *whosoever—you, me*, or *anybody else*, I told them—believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

“Now if you go down to my country and want to find me, all you’ll have to do is to ask where ‘WHOSOEVER’ lives, for that’s the nick-name they gave me then; and the little children cry out when I pass them, ‘There’s Whosoever!’ ‘There goes old Whosoever!’ But I don’t mind; indeed I rejoice, for I’m on the winning side, and I would that all ye who hear me now took your place as one of these ‘Whoso-overs.’ If not, ye *must* be among the other ‘Whosoovers’ in Rev. xx. 15. ‘And whosoever—*you, me*, or *anybody else*—was not *found* written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire!’”

Ah, reader! ask yourself, among which *am I now?*

J. C. R.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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“WHAT IF ——— ?”



See page 2.

A FEW years ago, there was living in the midst of a large and busy population a lone and friendless old man. Far away, it is feared, from God, he had made himself far away from his fellows also. He was a man with none to care for, and he asked none to care for him. He lived alone, and did all his little household work himself. If any offered to help him, he had neither welcome nor good word to give them. Especially if any spoke of his soul, of its separation from God and man, he was roused to anger, and would not listen. He went to neither church nor chapel, excusing himself, when obliged to give a reason, by his Sunday dinner, or the evening darkness. He disdained to plead ill-health, in spite of the general tendency of

his neighbours (and perhaps not only his) to be ill, or at least indisposed, on the Sabbath-day. A little cottage meeting was begun near to his house, and thither once or twice he went in the same solitary way. But no one knew what drew him there, or if the words spoken ever reached his soul.

So the years—years without love and without light, without God and without hope—went on, until death came, swift and sudden. His house stood in a court surrounded by others. He had just finished cleaning his cottage, when his passion was aroused by water being spilled on his whitened door-step. Going out, he spoke harsh and bitter words against his neighbours; then turning round to regain his room, he fell dead on the very door-step that had raised the storm of feeling. And thus, without a moment to be reconciled to man or to God, he was “destroyed without remedy.” (Prov. xxix. 1.)

The village was startled, and solemnized by his sudden call. Yet many did not lay it to heart. A few days after, the old man was buried. Neighbours were kinder to him in death than he had been to them in life, and they bore his body to the grave. Yet, as might be expected, there was little show of thought or feeling. One of the bearers, at least, was carrying the coffin as a matter of course, and almost mechanically assisted to lower it into the grave. Then, as is the custom of the place, he drew near to take a “last look.” Suddenly there rang in his ear as it had been a voice, and he heard the question, “*What if it had been you?*”

It was no voice of man, loud and near as it sounded. It was the voice of God speaking in his soul. Again and again it asked, “*What if it had been you?*” He could not silence it. He could not get away from it. He carried it home ringing in his ears, sounding a knell in his heart, “*What if it had been you?*” Oh, *what?* He well

knew what was the only answer he could make to that dark question. For the first time he realized what it was to be an unsaved sinner, living with the wrath of God abiding on him, going down to a hopeless death. Three things closed in upon him,—his *sin*, his *guilt*, his *doom*. The convictions of this young man were deep; his misery for a time was great. But whether in his need the sinner got true light for darkness, eternal life instead of living death, only the day will declare. This we know, that God that day set life and death before him, and spoke first in a voice of thunder, then in tones of love to his soul; and for that loud warning, that sweet whisper, he will yet have to give account.

Friend, has such a question never come to *you*? Reading of an explosion, of a railway accident,—of hundreds, it may be, sent into eternity without one farewell to earth, one preparation for the world to come, has the thought never crossed you—“What if it had been *me*?” “Where should I have gone?” “Where should I be now?” If so, remember that although the sudden call, the fearful death, has not been for you, their voice *is* for you. These appalling events cry aloud God’s warning to sinners, “Flee from the wrath to come!” and his reminder to his saints, “Be ye also ready.” They sound forth God’s “To-day!” “*Now is the accepted time.*”

For God gives every man “his chance,” as *men say*. Convictions, however they may tell of sin, of danger, or even of death itself, are the arrows of love, the shafts of mercy. Conviction is the Spirit’s work. He came to convince the world “of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John xvi. 8). Not one of us, when asked at the last day what we have done with our convictions, will be able before God to say, “I never had any. God never spoke to *me*. No one ever put out his hand to stop *me*,

or to save." But if we cannot say that, what can we say?

Conviction does not come to every man alike. There are convictions that come through *the understanding*. There was once a prisoner standing before his judge, and so powerfully did the prisoner reason, that the judge trembled, and cried out, "Go thy way! when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts xxiv. 25). The same prisoner had to confront a king. But wielding the Spirit's power, and speaking the Spirit's message, he made the proud monarch exclaim, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian." Both men felt the pricking of truth. But did the "almost" ever become "altogether" a Christian? Did the convenient season ever come? *Resist not the Spirit*. And then there are convictions of *the heart*; as when Peter, beholding the Lord's power, cried, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). Peter with his tender, yet impetuous heart, knew many convictions. You remember how, under the conviction of a look, he went out, and wept bitterly. (Matt. xxvi. 75.) God was teaching him to reach other hearts. The day was to come when under Peter's preaching 3000 were to be pricked to the heart, and brought in wounded of the Lord, to be healed of him. (Acts ii. 37-41.)

But the commonest convictions are those of *the conscience*. Twinges, "just a twinge," we are apt to say. But our bodies know when we have a twinge of toothache that there is something wrong at the root; or when a touch of rheumatism appears, there is mischief in the system. And fearing lest twinges may grow to torture, we do not trifle with "twinges," whether we can get them cured or not. And yet many of us have a great objection to going to the physician for "only a twinge." So with sinners. There were once

some proud Pharisees,—secure they were, healthy and well in their souls,—who dragged a sinner, an open sinner, before Christ to judge. And the Lord did judge: but it was the self-righteous accusers that he judged first. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," was his sentence. Did any one dare to lift a stone? Nay, rather it was as if a stone had fallen on them and crushed them. Would that it had stricken them down on their knees, there and then, crying, "God be merciful to us sinners." But no! however those knees might smite together, they served to carry them out of the presence of the sinless One. One by one, each with conviction's arrow in him, sin's burden on him, went out. (John viii. 9.) Friend, if the word of Jesus brings conviction to your conscience some time, let this be the last thing you do,—to leave him and take your sins along with you. Why not, instead, lay your sins upon him, and leave yourself at his feet?

But conviction is not conversion. Conviction in itself will never save you. It may only add to your condemnation. To have known your guilt, to have foreseen your doom, will turn your very best thoughts into witnesses against yourself. The question then is, *What are you doing with your convictions?* There are as many ways of dealing with them, as *they* have ways of dealing with the hearts of men. Some resist them pure and simple, putting them away. They hate to be made uncomfortable. A little Highland maid was told to pray, "Lord, show me *myself*." The Lord heard and answered, but the sight made her miserable. Had she resisted the Spirit, she might have got over her grief then, but it would only have been to meet it mountains high when in the light of the holy Judge. She learned that her worst sin was rejecting Christ, and resisting

his Holy Spirit's work. She did not, like the proud Pharisees, go away, but crept closer to Jesus' feet as she prayed, "Lord, show me *thyself*." God heard and answered that prayer too. He plucked the arrow out, and poured in the saving balm.

Others again, afraid to fight against God, but not prepared to give up sin and the world's service, put off conviction, or pass it on. We spoke of Felix, and his "convenient season." And, alas! there is nothing more common, nothing more fatal, than to trifle with conviction as he did. Fix it in your mind, that TO-DAY is your day of grace. Yield yourself NOW, although you should have to go down on your knees in the shop or the street, crying "Lord, save me, or I perish!" "Lord, save me *now*!"

But not only is the human heart ready to put off its own concerns, but it finds that an easy way of disposing of unpleasant convictions is to pass them on to somebody else. Read the story of the ewe-lamb and the great king. (2 Sam. xii.) As long as David thought Nathan was speaking of somebody else, how virtuously indignant he was—how bold and righteous in his words! But when the sin is brought home to *him*,—"Thou art the man!"—his head is bowed, and he has not a word to say for himself. "I have sinned," he cries; "I have sinned against the Lord."

Ah! here we learn what we ought to do with convictions,—take them back to the loving hand that sent them. He will keep us from resisting them, running away from them, or resting on them. He may deepen

them for a time, for he will not say peace when there is no peace. But he will surely remove them at the end. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. (Isa. xlii. 3.) "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Ps. cxlvii. 3). And no one that cometh to him will he cast out. He has a cure for all. You may have been hard as rock, needing to be blasted and broken. You may have been proud as Lucifer, requiring to be hurled from your high estate into the very dust. You may have been weak and unstable as water, nothing but his staying hand having kept you from emptying yourself into the pit of destruction. Yet fear not! He who has shown you that you are the sinner whose wages is death, has thereby told you that you are the sinner that he came to save. You whom he has broken down are the very ones he means to lift up in his arms of love.

Come unto him then, convicted sinner! Be drawn unto him, and not drawn elsewhere. The danger signal is up, and there is no time to be lost. The flag of mercy, and the voice of love, are calling you to the only refuge. There is safety alone in the blood of Jesus. There is peace alone in him. The heavy heart will find its comfort there. Come just as you are,—deeply convicted, or slightly convicted, with convictions you have resisted, or convictions you have gone against. He makes no conditions,—the worse you have been, the more need you have of him; but the worst of all in his sight is not to know your need, not to bring it to Him.

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MAN'S NEED AND GOD'S FULNESS.



"He could not live out of business."

See page 2.

MAN needs something to fill his soul ; and that which he needs can come only from God.

He cannot fill himself ; his fellow-men cannot fill him ; the world in which he lives cannot fill him. His soul remains *empty*, in spite of all that he can do to fill it with what he calls happiness. If it is empty, then he must be unhappy ; for the soul

was made to be filled, and until it is filled he must be *unhappy*.

We are told of a man of genius, who died many years ago, a poet and a philosopher, loaded with fame and honour. "I do not remember (he said in his last days) a single day in my past life that I can really call happy." Yet he had been seeking for eighty years, to *fill* his soul with

fame. But fame did nothing for him; except, perhaps, for a time to make him feel less weary than he would otherwise have done. His was still the old cry, from the beginning to the end of his long life, "Who will show me any good?"

We knew a man of wealth who died as he lived, with a soul unfilled. He had all through a long life been seeking pleasure. He had travelled much, and seen many men and many lands. He had spent large sums in collecting pictures, gems, marbles, statues, with which to adorn a splendid house. He moved about from town to country, from country to town, from England to France, and from France to England, mingling with all society, and throwing himself into all gaiety. Yet nothing satisfied him. He was restless and nervous; the tones of his voice and the lines of his face betokened perpetual uneasiness and disquietude, even in the midst of laughter and jesting. All was hollowness within: no peace, no rest. Once we had opportunity of speaking with him on eternal things. He turned away; and his countenance gave us the impression, not so much of dislike to what we said, as of entire hopelessness. He said afterwards to a friend that he did not understand what we meant. He was empty: he knew it; he was trying to fill himself; but all in vain. He had gone the whole round of pleasure; he had tasted every cup which the world could give. But he had found nothing to fill him. Yet he was daily repeating the same weary round: trying to make the cup a little sweeter; to make the wine sparkle more brightly; to add fresh sprightliness to the dance, and animation to the song. But the fulness did not come. The cup always left its bitterness behind; the song died away in melancholy, and the dance ended in loneliness and depression. It was a

sad, weary, wasted life. He had no God. That was the secret of his sadness.

There was another of whom we may make mention. He toiled all his days for money; and he gained what he sought. He died rich, in a noble mansion, surrounded with *luxuries*. His whole time had been spent in *business*. He might be said to live in the Counting-house and the Exchange. He was not a man of pleasure, nor of literature, but of business. He was a thoroughly business man; honest, and amiable, but engrossed with one thing, business, he seemed to lose relish for all other things. Yet care was written on his forehead; and the higher thoughts of the life to come had been supplanted by the lower concerns of this. He could not live out of business, yet business did not fill his soul. All there was emptiness. Money came, but peace came not. He was not avaricious, but still money-making was his delight. His soul seemed to wither away in this poor employment. The more he threw himself into it, the less it seemed to fill him. He died as he lived, unfilled, unsatisfied.

These cases represent thousands of others in our world, who go about, from day to day, seeking rest but finding none; trying to fill their souls, but always missing the one thing that would fill them; hungry, but finding no food; thirsting, but unable to quench their thirst. They are like those who dig wells in the sand of the great desert, hoping that water will flow in, but no water comes; or like the shipwrecked sailors in their boat, out on the broad sea, who drink the waters of the ocean, which only increase their thirst.

The world, amid all its sorrow, has much in it to allure the eye, and make men think that in finding its pleasures or its money, they find that which will fill the soul. It looks often very

beautiful, and it is difficult to make men believe that its beauty is all unreal. It can do nothing to fill the human spirit, or to heal its diseases, or to dry up its tears, or to give it rest in weariness.

Travelling one day through a dreary part of the Arabian desert, where we knew there was no water and no verdure, nothing but rocks and sands, we were surprised to see at our right hand, and not far off, as we thought, a lovely landscape, with noble cliffs, green woods, and a clear lake, over which light barques with white sails were moving. It deceived us strangely for a while; and then vanished away, leaving us in the hot sand-waste, unsheltered and unrefreshed. Of such mockeries this world is made up, and men are cheated daily with the gay unreality. The desert-vision or *mirage* did not deceive us, for we knew from our guides that we were in the very heart of the wilderness. We did not go out of our way to approach it, for we were told that it was unreal. Had we yielded to appearance, and pursued the deceitful landscape, we should have gone far astray and been mocked at last. We believed our guides, and pursued our journey.

Is there then such a thing as a real and sure hope? Can the soul really be filled? Can all its restless cravings be satisfied? Has God provided food for the immortal spirit? Is there a resting-place for man's weary foot?

Yes. God has provided all those things most fully. He that made the soul with all its immortal longings, with all its vast capacities for containing joy, has not left it to starve, or to pine away on bread that cannot satisfy. He knows what the soul which he has made requires, and he has sent down from his own blessed heaven that which will fill the emptiest, and gladden the most sorrowful.

"But what does he give me to fill my soul?" a man may say.

"He gives you HIS OWN LOVE."

"But can LOVE fill my soul, and satisfy all my longings, so that I shall not need to be always asking who will show me any good?"

"Yes; love can do all this. For love is the great comforter. Love fills the soul most wonderfully. Even human love does this; how much more the love of God!"

"Do you mean that the love of God, coming into my soul, can do for me what gold or pleasure cannot do?"

"Yes; I mean that, when we come to know that *the great God who made us, loves us*, and wants us to love him in return, we feel as if we had got hold of a thought which makes us forget everything else."

"I know that the love of man or woman towards us, has a most soothing effect on us even in our most depressed and despairing hours; when disappointed, vexed, weary, and troubled, wishing that we had never been born, a message or a letter comes to us telling us of a long-forgotten friend who still loves us and wants to comfort and help us, the effect is wonderful. I admit that I have been thus cheered by human love."

"And does not this show you that it is *love alone* that can really fill the heart? If then the love of man can do so much, how much more the great love of God?"

"But how can I know of this love?"

"God himself thus writes to us concerning his own love, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins'" (1 John iv. 10).

"And what proof has he given of this love?" "He has written to us thus: '*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*'"

• “The gift of his Son, then, is the proof of his love?”

“Yes; could there be a greater? ‘In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him’ (1 John iv. 9). Love like this, so large, so free, so holy, is that which alone can fill the poor empty soul of man.”

We have not to *buy* this love. It is free. We have not to *work* for this love. It comes to us when we are without strength. We have not to *pray* for this love. It comes to us unasked, like the sunshine or the rain. We have not to *deserve* this love. It is for the undeserving and the evil: otherwise it would not suit us at all. We have not to *go for* this love to any place, far or near. It is at hand, and round about us like the air we breathe. We have not to *wait for* this love. It is already waiting for us like the dew of the morning, or the manna which fell all about the tents of Israel. We have not to *make ourselves holy or loveable* in order to get it. It is love to the sinful and the unloveable; to those who have never loved God at all. (Eph. ii. 4.)

Such is the great love of God which has been revealed from heaven to the sons of men. It is free, holy, large, righteous love; love the like of which man never knew; love which many waters cannot quench and which the floods cannot drown; love which survives years of sin, and unbelief, and ungodliness; love which is trying to find its way into each

human heart, so as to fill that heart with God himself, and to bring all heaven, with its blessedness, into the most unrestful and most desolate of human bosoms.

It is from *above* that the filling up of the human heart must come. The fulness of joy comes down from heaven; and the thought of the heavenly fulness is of itself enough to cheer. With such a fountainhead of joy above us, who need despair of happiness? “God is love” (1 John iv. 8).

And this is our message to each of our fellow-men. *Enough in God* for you! Will you believe it, and go to him for that fulness which would fill your empty soul and make you happy for ever?

Take God for your portion, we say to all who are seeking rest, but finding none; who would fain be happy but know not how. He is better than gold; better than pleasure; better than all the world can give. Let him fill your soul with himself and with his love. You will need no more. You will have a heaven upon earth. Your soul will be filled.

The great message which the Son of God, when here, delivered to the weary sons of men, was, “I WILL GIVE YOU REST.” He came from the land of rest to bring that rest to us. He took our sins upon him, that he might remove everything that would prevent our obtaining rest. He purchased rest for us; and he gives it freely. No one can say, “I am weary, because Christ has not enough of rest for me, or because he refused to give it.”

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IS GOD IN THIS HOUSE?

A WORD ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP.

BY THE LATE JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., LONDON.



IN Greenland, when a stranger knocks at the door, he asks, "Is God in this house?" And if they answer, Yes, he enters. Reader, this little messenger knocks at your door with the Greenland salutation, IS GOD IN THIS HOUSE? Were you, like Abraham, entertaining an angel unawares, what would be the report he would take back to heaven? Would he find you commanding your children and your household, and teaching them the way of the Lord? Would he find an altar in your dwelling? Do you worship God with your children? If not, then God is not in your

house. A prayerless family is a godless family. It is worse. It is a family on which Jehovah frowns. He will pour out his fury upon it some day. "O Lord, pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." (Jer. x. 25.)

Two Reasons for Family Worship.—

1. The godly householders mentioned in Scripture practised it. Would you desire to be like Abraham, the friend of God? Wherever he pitched his tent, he builded an altar, and called on the name of the Lord, (Gen. xii. 7, 8, xiii. 4, 18;) and Jehovah declared concerning him, "I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," (Gen. xviii. 19.) Would you resemble David, the man after God's own heart? At the close of a busy day we find him going home to bless his household. (1 Chron. xvi. 43.) I scarcely know the situation in life in which a willing family might not contrive to pray together. I have known of family worship among the reapers in a barn. It used to be common in the fishing boats upon the firths and lakes of Scotland. I have heard of its being observed in the depth of a coal-pit. If you live in a scoffing, ungodly neighbourhood, so much the better. Abraham built his altar while heathen Canaanites looked on. He lifted up a testimony for God, and God honoured him, so that Abimelech, his neighbour, was constrained to say, "God is with thee in all that thou doest." (Gen. xxi. 22.)

2. Wherever true religion revives, family worship abounds. When the Spirit is poured out on the house of David, "the land shall mourn, every family apart." (Zech. xii. 12.) I can remember no instance of a great revival of which this was not an attendant sign. It was so in the revival in Ireland in 1859. Listen to the account which Richard Baxter gives

of Kidderminster during his ministry: "When I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name; and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not above one family in the side of a street who did not so, and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us some hopes of their sincerity."

Two Advantages of Family Worship.

—1. It would make your home much happier. It has been said with much truth, "Family prayer is the oil which removes friction, and causes all the complicated wheels of the family to move smoothly and noiselessly." It is one way, and the very best, for promoting that harmony of feeling so essential to domestic enjoyment. Some families are held together by hardly any bond, except that they lodge under the same roof, and assemble round the same board. They are selfish and sullen; cross words, peevish answers, and angry recriminations, make up all their intercourse. The customary meal is despatched in a gloomy silence, or embittered by fretful words. I have known families so little at home with one another, that it was quite a relief when any casual visitor dropped in to break the irksomeness of their own society. I have seen brothers and sisters so ill-assorted in the families in which God had planted them together, that they had no subject of common interest, and no mutual love nor confidence. They could converse and be happy with strangers, but not with one another. And I have seen this in families where there was a form of family worship, a pretence, a semblance of prayer, but never where there was the reality. If yours be such a family, before peace and affection visits it, you must say, "Come and let us seek the Lord." If you could only persuade them to take into their hands the volume that speaks goodwill

to man, and then, as they bowed before the mercy-seat, in their common name you said *Our Father*, and confessed their common sins, returned thanks for any mercies which the day had brought, and asked such blessings as all need, this process could not be long persisted in till you would see its softening and harmonising influence. The dew of Hermon would begin to come down, and you would exclaim as you saw the difference, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psalm cxxxiii.)

But perhaps your family dwells in unity, but it is not a holy unity. It is not sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. You are never at a loss for the materials of a cheerful intercourse. But amidst all the sprightliness and cordiality and kind feeling which encompass your fire-side, one ingredient of gladness is wanting,—God is forgotten. In the morning you meet and give one another a joyous greeting, and, the morning meal despatched, rush away to the day's engagements without a word of acknowledgment to that God whose sleepless eye guarded your midnight pillow; without one word of prayer to bespeak his upholding and guidance in this day's untrodden path. And when the evening hour of intercourse is over, and you have discussed the pleasant or prosperous incidents of the day, you lie away, *cheerful* but *unthankful*, to a prayerless slumber, perhaps to awake in the eternal world, and find that the Lord is not with you. How it would give tone and intensity to the affection of your smiling circle, if you could be brought to love one another *in the Lord*! With what new eyes you would learn to look upon yourselves, if you came to regard one another as brethren for eternity! Were it manifest of all the members of a family that God is their Father, Christ their elder Brother, and the

Holy Spirit their Comforter, such a family would possess a joy which the removal of no member could take away. That joy has often come into households through the channel of domestic devotion. For,

2. Family worship is an ordinance which God has often blessed to the saving of souls. In houses where it is conducted with life and feeling, it has often proved a converting ordinance. A few years ago an English gentleman visited America, and spent some days with a godly friend. He was a man of talent and accomplishments, but an infidel. Four years afterwards he returned to the same house a Christian. They wondered at the change, but little suspected when and where it originated. He told them that when he was present at their family worship on the first evening of his former visit, and when, after the chapter was read, they all knelt down to pray, the recollection of such scenes in his father's house, long years ago, rushed in on his memory, so that he did not hear a single word. But the occurrence made him *think*, and his thoughtfulness ended in his leaving the howling wilderness of infidelity, and finding a quiet rest in the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ.

Some years ago, an Irish wanderer, his wife, and his sister, asked a night's shelter in the cabin of a godly schoolmaster. With the characteristic hospitality of his nation, the schoolmaster made them welcome. It was his hour for evening worship, and when the strangers were seated, he began by readingslowly and solemnly thesecond chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The young man sat astonished. The expressions, "dead in trespasses and sins," "children of wrath," "walking according to the course of this world," were new to him. He sought an explanation. He was told that this is God's account of the state of man by nature. He felt that it was exactly

his own state. "In this way I have walked from my childhood. In the service of the god of this world we have come to your house." He was on the way to a fair, where he intended to pass a quantity of counterfeit money. But God's word had found him out. He produced his store of coin, and begged his host to cast it into the fire; and asked anxiously if he could not obtain the word of God for himself. His request was complied with; and next morning, with their new treasure, the party, who had now no errand to the fair, returned to their own home.

Many servants have been awakened at family worship. And children have there often heard truths which, when the Spirit brought them to remembrance in after days, perhaps in days of profligacy, and when far from their father's house, have sent home the prodigal. It is not only of Zion's solemn assemblies, but of Jacob's humble dwellings, the little fireside sanctuaries, that the Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, "This man was born there." In your house there have been, perhaps, several immortal spirits born into the world. Have there been any born again?

A Word to the Prayerless.—Prayerless parents! your irreligion may prove your children's damnation. They might have been within the fold of the Saviour by this time, had not you hindered them when entering in. That time when God visited your family with a heavy stroke, they

were thoughtful for a season, but you did not bring your children around the family altar to give a heavenly direction to that thoughtfulness, and it soon died away. That evening when they came home from the Sabbath school so serious, if you had been a godly father or mother, you would have taken your boy aside, and spoken tenderly to him, and asked what his teacher had been telling him; and you would have prayed with him, and tried to deepen the impression. But your children came in from the church or school, and found no church in their father's house. Their hearts were softened, but your worldliness soon hardened them. Your idle talk, your frivolity, your Sunday visitors, your prayerless evening, ruined all. Your children were coming to Christ, and you suffered them not. And you will not need to hinder them long. The carnal mind is enmity against God, but no enmity is so deep as theirs who were almost reconciled and then drew back. You drove your children back. You hardened them. They may never more be moved. They may grow up as prayerless and ungodly as yourself. If God should change yourself, *they* may soon be too hard for your own tears and entreaties. If you die as you are, their evil works will follow you to the world of woe.

Oh, think of these things! A prayerless house is not only a cheerless one, but it is a guilty one; for where God is not, there Satan is.

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BREAD! BREAD!



THERE is no cry that goes to the heart like the cry for bread. "Only a loaf!" "Only a crust!"—it is the cry of the faint, the poor, the perishing; the cry of the man in his want, of the mother for her children. Man does not cry to his fellow-man for life; for life is not man's to give, but only to take away. But he cries for bread, to keep life in, to make life

worth calling life at all. And the call for bread is as real, as constant, in the rich man's house as in the poor man's room. It is only less loud because the want is met in other ways, or because an answer comes almost before the call.

And at times the cry becomes a people's cry. People cannot do without bread. In the siege of Paris in

1870-71, the people held out bravely, how bravely no one knew, until the Germans marching in found remains of rats that had served for meat, and of what looked like stone, but was meant for bread. Bread, even if made of chopped straw, must be had; not till it failed did Paris give in. And in our own country many may remember the day when the people rose in riot to demand cheaper bread, or, if that were refused, to seize on bread without price at all. And many of us can recall since that day famines which have been famines of bread, however they may have been called by other names,—as the cotton famine of Lancashire, the potato famine of Ireland, the rice famine of India. For rice and potatoes in those countries are what bread is in our favoured land,—the staple food. They meet the universal need, they still the unappeasable cry. They are the staff of life there, as bread is the staff of life here.

Ah! here we have come to it! Personal, individual, touching each one for himself, as this need is, the cry for bread is more than the poor's cry, more than the people's cry; it is the world's cry for what it must have, or die! The universe, if we could only hear its voice, and interpret its language, cries aloud, in its living, for food for that life. Or it only does not cry because, before want is felt, He who has given the life has supplied its needs. "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season." (Psalm cxlv. 9, 15.) David, in writing these words, knew well what he was saying. He had had as wide an experience as most of want and trouble, and yet the Lord had never failed him. He could well say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." "There is no want to them that fear him;" and many since

David's day have found God's promise of sure bread and water to be true. "It always comes in the end," said a poor widow to the writer; and yet that aged woman had waited in vain through "wages day" for the breadwinner who had left her,—waited without a crust to eat, a coal to burn. Faint and sick with want, but fainter far with a mother's love and longing, she had still cried, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him;" and sooner or later, but never too late, the answer to her cry had come. For faithful is He who has promised, and before whom not one sparrow falls unnoted or unknown.

So much, then, for the body and its bread. But there is in man another hunger still. That need must be met, or man will die. That want must be satisfied, if man would live. It is the hunger of the never-dying soul for undying life, the need of the perishing sinner for the living Saviour. God—the same God who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—"giveth you" that Son as "the true Bread from heaven." (John vi. 32.) For Jesus tells us, "I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.)

But you may say, "I do not feel this hunger of the soul. I do not even know what it is. If I can only get enough for my body, to eat and to drink, to have and to hold, I do not want any more." Others, again, feel an emptiness in their hearts, a need in their souls, but cannot tell what is the matter with them. Such cry as babies cry, not in articulate words, but "with no language but a cry." To themselves the cry may have no meaning—bring no relief. But does not the mother hear and understand her "infant crying in the

night"? Yes; and so does God hear and answer the cry that has gone up to heaven. For it he has provided Jesus, the heavenly Bread, the Bread of life, of which "if a man eat, he shall live for ever." (John vi. 51.)

All need this bread, however few may feel their need. A dead man does not feel. A man asleep forgets his hunger. A sick man cannot eat. A full man loathes plain food. And such are many among us. Intoxicated with pleasure, in stupor from poison, diseased by sin, or dead asleep in folly, man knows not his want now; man will not come unto Christ, the Bread of life, and live. Many a one, like the prodigal of old, (Luke xv.) has to waste his substance on riotous living, and to starve on the husks that swine do eat, before he remembers his Father's house, with its bread enough and to spare. Many a one is too busy filling his barns to think upon the hour when he can no longer eat, drink, and be merry. Many a Dives is too full of his purple and fine linen here, to remember that there will be a day when he would give the world for a drop of cold water to cool his tongue. Blessed be God, there is One more merciful to us than we are to ourselves. Jesus not only is the Bread of life, but he gives himself as that Bread to all that come to him. There is no life for the soul but in him. Because he is the Life, he is the Life-giver. Because he is the Bread of life, he sustains the life that he has given. He feeds it, strengthens it, and makes it grow unto perfection. Oh, the strength, the joy of living on Jesus thus! Then we learn the meaning of that word, (Matt. v. 6:) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Then we cry with all our heart, for soul as for body, "Give us day by day our daily bread."

Friend, have you prayed this prayer? Have you got this Bread of life? If not, will you not this day arise and go to your Father with the cry, "I have sinned"? (Luke xv.) and with the prayer, "Lord, evermore give us this bread"? (John vi. 34.) Jesus, the Bread of life, will never send one true seeker empty away. On earth, how tender his compassion was to those around him. He saw the multitude faint and weary, and straightway he gave them bread, every man as much as he would. And when he healed the sick, or raised the dead, we find him commanding that they should eat, or eating with them. (Mark v. 43; John xii. 2.) And as for the body, so for the soul. Wherever Jesus went, souls were made to live by his word, to feed on his grace, to grow by his gifts. His own hunger was put aside, while he aroused the sense of need in a lost sinner's soul, (John iv.) and filled it. He is the only One that can so satisfy the desire of every living soul. Sometimes he may seem to delay, sometimes even to deny, for he would have us know that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." But his word cannot fail; his love never forsakes; his truth never forgets. And this we find when our prayers are answered, even as we thought not to ask.

Some years ago, in a London garret, a Christian mother, pinched and worn, sat by her dying boy. Her flying fingers could not finish her work that night, and her heart was like to break. For from the bed came the cry, "Mother, if I had only a bit of bread! Mother, are you sure you cannot get the one little bit of bread?"—"Not till to-morrow, my darling," she had answered more than once. And not then, she knew, unless she could get her sewing paid for. "Mother,"

said the pleading voice again, "it is God that sends us the bread, is it not?"—"Yes, my child; God will send us bread." "But when?"—"To-morrow." "But, mother, God tells us to ask, Give us *this day* our daily bread. God would not say to-day if he meant to-morrow."—"My darling," answered the weeping mother, "I cannot tell what God means; but trust in him, and in his own good time, to-day or to-morrow, God *will* give you bread." "Very well, mother; it is eight o'clock, but perhaps God will send it yet before to-day is done." The child lay so still, he might have been sleeping. But no! he was only waiting. Nine o'clock struck, then ten. "Only another hour," he said, "before the day is done." And true enough, as eleven chimed, he opened his glad eyes, exclaiming, "Don't cry, mother dear, God has sent me bread,—the angels are bringing it. I shall never be hungry any more! *This day* God *has* given me bread." And even as he spoke his spirit passed into the land where none shall say, "I am sick," neither shall there be hunger and thirst any more, "for the Lamb shall feed them, and God shall wipe all tears from off all faces."

Dear reader, again this day the Bread is offered to you,—of which if a man eat he shall never die: he shall live for ever. What will you do with it? I do not ask you what will you say to it; but what will you do with it—with Christ the Bread of life? That Bread is God's gift; nothing you can do can make him take it back, or save you from

responsibility concerning it. A gift must be accepted, or rejected. If any one on earth makes you a present, you must take it,—or leave it. To leave this Bread alone is to neglect your own salvation, to refuse God's unspeakable gift. Years ago, a little water-cress seller in the streets of London picked up a scrap of paper. On it was printed, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The child had known plenty of bodily hunger,—that was far from being a blessed thing,—but it was not until she spelled out these words that she felt a hunger of the soul, and never rested until she learned their meaning; and they were made God's message of life to her soul. Only one verse! and yet it saved her life, because it led her to Jesus the Saviour and the Bread of life. Is your life saved or lost?

Believer, are you living *on* Christ as well as living *by* Christ? Are you daily feeding on and growing by the Bread of life? Is it Christ in you, as well as you in Christ? If so, and this Bread is indeed your own, remember to cast it on the waters around you, and "thou shalt find it after many days." For Jesus, the Bread of life, is still crying to the multitudes in the valley of decision, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." (Isaiah lv. 2, 3.) "I am the Bread of life." (John vi. 35.)

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"BORN AGAIN."

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—JOHN iii. 3.

By D. L. MOODY.



ONE afternoon, in the inquiry-room, a person came in, and I said, "Are you a Christian?" "Why," she said, "of course I am." "Well," I said, "how long have you been one?" "Oh, sir, I was born one!" "Oh, indeed! then I am very glad to take you by the hand. I congratulate you; you are the first woman I ever met who was born a Christian. You are more fortunate than others: they are born children of Adam." She hesitated a little, and then tried to make out that because she was born in England she was a Christian. A great many have the idea, that

because they were born in a Christian country, they have been born of the Spirit. Now, in this third chapter of John, the new birth is brought out so plain, that if any one will read it carefully and prayerfully, his eyes will surely be opened. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," — it remains flesh; and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and that remains spirit. So when a man is born of God, he has God's nature. When a man is born of his parents, he receives their nature, and they received the nature of their parents, and you can trace it back to Eden. We have received the nature of the first Adam; but when a man is born of God, or born from above, or born of the Spirit,—that is the way the Holy Ghost puts it in that third verse,—he receives God's nature, and then it is that he leaves the life of the flesh for the life of the Spirit.

There are others who say, "Oh yes, I am a Christian, because I was baptized." Now I want to say here that baptism is one thing, and being born again is another. You cannot baptize a man into the kingdom of God. If I could save men by baptizing them, you would not find me preaching. I would get water and baptize them; that would be the quickest way. It would be no use to be praying and pleading for men to flee from the wrath to come. But you can never get into the kingdom of God by baptism. Baptism is all right in its place. I am not here to cry down church ordinances; but I am talking about the new birth, and there are a great many deceived on this one point, thinking that because they have been baptized at some time in their life, they have become Christians. But that is not new birth; that is not being born from above and of the Spirit.

There is another class that say, "Oh yes, I became a Christian when

I joined the church." But there are a great many outwardly united with the church who are on their way to death and ruin. One of the twelve whom Christ chose to follow him turned out a hypocrite and a traitor. My friends, do not build your hope of heaven merely upon some profession of your faith; but bear in mind it is the being born of God.

Now just think, and ask yourselves that question, "Have I been born again?" It is the most solemn question that will ever come before you down here,—“Have I been born from above? Have I been born of the Spirit?” — It is not making some new resolutions. It is not trying to do good. A great many say, "I try to do the best I can, and I think it will come out all right." What has that to do with the new birth and the new creation? It does not say that the kingdom of God is for him that tries to do the best he can, but to him that believeth, or that is born of the Spirit; and "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I cannot serve God in the flesh. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And before a man can truly worship God, he must be born of God; he must be born of the Spirit. Then, with this new birth, with this new life, he can serve God. Then the yoke is easy; then the burden is light. A man cannot truly serve God before he has been born of the Spirit. It is utterly impossible. Man's carnal mind is enmity against God; his natural heart is at war with God: it always has been, and it always will be. And not only that, but you cannot make it better. Somebody said that God never merely mends us. God creates anew. Do not be trying to patch up that old Adam nature. God says, "It shall never come into my presence." But he tells us how we

are to come into his presence, and how we are to get into his kingdom. You cannot educate men into it. This is what the world is trying to do. But he that climbeth up by some other way than the Lord's way, the same is a thief and a robber. (John x. 1.) You had better be born into it in God's way.

We have a law in America that no man shall be President of the United States that has not been born on American soil. I have never heard one complain of that law. I come here to your country, and I do not complain because you have a Queen to reign over you. What right have I to complain? Has not England a right to say who shall rule it, and who shall be its Queen? Foreigners have no right to interfere. And I would like to ask you this question, Has not God a right to say *who* shall come into his kingdom, and *how* we shall come? Now, my friend, God tells us here that we are to come into his kingdom by the new birth. We must be born from above, born of the Spirit; and then we get a nature that goes out towards God. Without this change, it is not possible that a man can ever see that kingdom. A man that cannot spend one Sabbath on earth among God's people, what is he to do with that eternal Sabbath, with those that have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"? A man must have a spiritual nature before he wants to go to heaven.

Now let us go back to this man, to whom Christ said this word. I often rejoice he did not say it to that woman at the well, nor to the "woman of the city which was a sinner." If he had said it to them, people would have said, "Oh, that poor woman needs to be converted; but I lead a respectable and moral life,—I don't need to be converted." But who did Christ say it to? It was to Nicodemus. Nicodemus

stood very high; he was one of the church dignitaries; he stood, perhaps, as high as any man in Jerusalem, except the high priest himself. There is not one word in Scripture against him; he was a man of spotless character. Yet what does Christ say to him? "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He answered, "What do you mean by being born again,—born from above, born of the Spirit?" But Christ did not take back what he had said. He just repeated it,—"*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" I can just imagine Nicodemus was like tens of thousands of men to-day. The moment you talk to them about regeneration, or conversion, there is a scowl on their forehead. They say, "I don't understand it." Of course the natural man does not understand spiritual things. I have no doubt that if a man had spoken about this to me twenty-one years ago, I should have said it was all nonsense, and that I did not understand what the man was talking about. But I understand it all now; (and here I can call hundreds of witnesses.) Why? Because I have been born of the Spirit.

The illustration which Christ used to Nicodemus was the wind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Now you cannot see the Spirit of God work in this audience; but I hope and pray he may be working now in the hearts of many, convincing them of sin. Do you believe more than ever that you are a sinner? Well, that is the work of the Holy Ghost. The devil never told you you are a sinner; he tries to make you believe that you are good enough. If you believe to-night that you have sinned against God, that is the work of the Holy Ghost. We cannot see

him, but there are a great many who know he is here. Suppose I should say, "I don't believe in the wind, and that it must be all imagination. I have lived thirty-seven years, and have never seen the wind." I can just imagine a boy there saying, "Why, I know more than that man; I know there is wind, for it blew my hat off this very day; and I have often felt it blowing in my face." My friends, you have never felt the wind more than I have felt the Spirit of God. You have never seen the effects of the wind more than I have seen the effects of the Spirit of God, and of the workings of the Holy Ghost.

Then some of you may have been saying, "I wish Mr. Moody would tell us how we are to become Christians; for he says that we cannot be Christians by trying to do good, and by making new resolutions." Many a time you have been at a meeting like this, and have resolved to turn over a new leaf, and perhaps you may now be forming another good resolution. If that is all, you will only break it. What are you going to do? If it is a new birth you are to have, you cannot create life. Can you bring life to a dead fly? All the wise men in London cannot do it. God alone is the author of life; and if you have the new birth, it must be God's work. There is a man dying,—can you put new life into him? Or can you raise up a dead body by saying, "Young man, arise"? That is the work of God. Your souls are dead in trespasses and sin. May the Lord Jesus Christ speak life. If

he says, "Let there be life," there will be life.

Now perhaps some of you will say, "Then I haven't anything to do." Well, in a sense you have not. Salvation has been worked out for you by another. But you do not get it by *doing*. God has but one price for salvation. Do you want to know what it is? It is WITHOUT MONEY, and WITHOUT PRICE. (Isa. lv. 1.) "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." (Rom. vi. 23.) I say to you, hearer, Will you have that gift now? Then you say, "If I have nothing to do, what is going to become of me? If it is not by working in earnest, how am I to be saved?" Let Scripture tell. Take the illustration Christ used to Nicodemus. He took him to the remedy: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.) Now *there* is the remedy. How am I to be saved? By looking, for life, eternal life,—just by looking. It was by *looking to Christ*, and believing in him, that this new birth,—pardon,—eternal life, was to come. The whole plan of salvation may be spoken in two words,—*Giving*,—and *Receiving*. God gives; I receive.

Oh, sinner, look and live! May God help every lost soul now hearing me to look to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

(Address in Agricultural Hall,
London, 1875.)

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SEPTEMBER 1883.

THE LAST OF THE TWELVE.



See page 2.

MR. JOHN VINE HALL, the author of "The Sinner's Friend," was born March 14, 1774. When a young man, at Maidstone, his business pursuits placed him in circumstances of great temptation. His temperament was always lively, his disposition most amiable and generous. He was a genial companion, could enjoy a sprightly joke, and sing a merry song.

His society was therefore much sought after. He thus was led astray, and "erred through strong drink."

Often has he told me, with tears in his eyes, how he became a sort of ringleader among the dissipated young men of the neighbourhood. Those whose habits of life are at variance with the revealed will of God, naturally try to persuade them-

selves that the Bible is a cunningly devised fable. It was so with him. He frequented discussion meetings at which infidel opinions were advocated, and where Christianity was ridiculed. From walking "in the counsel of the ungodly," he stood "in the way of sinners," and then "sat" down "in the seat of the scornful." The *Age of Reason* became his favourite study, and he frequently carried it in his pocket.

The day previous to the accident which resulted in his death, he told me, with much emotion, how he was delivered from the snare of infidelity. A friend lent him Bishop Porteus's *Evidences of Christianity*. Its arguments convinced him. He had no wish really to embrace religion and alter his course of life, but he felt indignant at having been so grossly deceived. Therefore, pulling the *Age of Reason* from his pocket, he opened it, and thrust it into the fire with the poker, saying, "Tom Paine, you've cheated me; you're a liar; go to the flames."

But his heart was not yet changed. A few years after, through attending the preaching of a Wesleyan minister at Worcester, he became convinced of the necessity of the change of heart, and, anxious for salvation, attended a "class-meeting," held weekly for Christian conversation and prayer. He was undoubtedly sincere in his professions. He truly felt interested in religion, and wished for something better than he had found in the world. But he had not really discovered the "plague of his own heart," nor mourned with "godly sorrow" for his sin, seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit to renounce it. He soon fell again. It was now that the providential escape occurred which he mentioned at the anniversary of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, in Exeter Hall, on May 17, 1836, and at a public meeting of the Norwich City Mission in 1839.

"In the town where I reside," said the speaker, "were twelve young men who were accustomed, early in life, to meet together for indulgence in drinking and all manner of excess. In the course of time some of them engaged in business; but their habits of sin were so entwined with their very existence that they became bankrupts, or insolvents. Eight of them died under the age of forty, without a hope beyond the grave; three others were reduced to the most abject poverty.

"One more, the *last* of the twelve, the *worst of all*, remains to be accounted for. He was a sort of ring-leader, taking the head of the table at convivial parties, and sitting up whole nights, drinking and inducing others to do the same—never going to bed sober. He was an infidel, a disciple of Tom Paine, both in principle and practice, a blasphemer of the word of God; yet a good-natured man, and would do anybody a kindness. At length he left the town, and went to reside at a distance, where he was married, and everything seemed prosperous; but, instead of being thankful to God for his mercy, and watching against his besetting sin, he gave way to his old propensity, and brought misery to his family and friends.

"One dark night, being in the neighbourhood of Stourbridge, he had been drinking to excess, and, in a state of intoxication, he wandered out of the house, and staggered amongst the coal-pits, which are in many places left open and exposed. These he passed in safety; but the road he took went over a canal; he missed the bridge, and *rolled over the bank to the edge of the water*. And here he seemed to have arrived at the end of his wicked course; but God, who is rich in mercy, had *caused a stone to lie directly in his path*, and thus spared him in this, the apparently last hour of his mortal existence; *one turn more*, and he would have sunk into eternal ruin, and his disembodied spirit been

ushered into the presence of the Judge of all. The arm of mercy, however, interposed; he saw the water beneath him, he crawled back again into the road; there he was picked up, and lodged in a public-house for the night.

"This miraculous escape, it might have been thought, would have made a deep and lasting impression on his mind; but no,—it was viewed simply as a lucky escape.

"In spite of his better judgment, injury to his worldly interests, his desire to be esteemed by his friends, his ardent affection for his wife, together with his religious convictions, he frequently felt his old habit taking possession of him with demon-power. There were then no Total Abstinence Societies which might shield him with their sympathy and example. When every one drank, was it to be expected he would abstain? The advice generally given was—'Use but not abuse.' Yet to him the use was ever urging to the abuse. With his peculiar temperament and habits, one glass would so rouse his appetite that self-control was gone.

"For a short time he triumphed over his old enemy. But he soon fell again. But earnest prayers were daily offered for him by one who was indeed his guardian angel. On one particular day there was special opportunity—even that he, whose life and love were dearer than all the world, might die at once a penitent, rather than live on in sin. How great must have been the delight occasioned by finding him an hour after in tears, exclaiming—'I have heard as if it was a voice from heaven, saying, If thou forsakest thy sin, thou shalt be forgiven!'"

He thus referred to this circumstance in the speech already quoted: "After an indulgence in drinking for some days, having come to his senses, he began to reason with himself upon his guilt and folly, sur-

rounded with blessings, yet abusing the whole—and in an angry passionate manner, he muttered, 'Oh! it's no use for me to repent; my sins are too great to be forgiven.' He had no sooner uttered these words than a voice seemed to say, with strong emphasis, 'IF THOU WILT FORSAKE THY SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN.' The poor man started at what he believed to be a real sound, and hastily turned round, but seeing no one, he said to himself, 'Surely I have been drinking till I am going mad.' He fell on his knees, and, half suffocated by his feelings, cried out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' The poor wretch was broken-hearted; and now his besetting sin appeared more horrible than ever, but *it must be conquered, or he must perish*. Then commenced a contest more terrible than that of conflicting armies—than Waterloo, or all other battles whatever—the soul was at stake; an impetuous torrent was to be turned into an opposite course. He now began to search the Bible, which he had once despised. Here he saw that crimson and scarlet sins could be blotted out and made white as snow; that the grace of God was all-sufficient. He refrained from intemperance, commenced family prayer, and hope again revived. But his deadly foe still pursued him, and he was again overcome.

"Now his disgrace and sinfulness appeared worse than ever, and with melancholy feeling he cried out, in anguish of spirit, that he was doomed to eternal misery, and it was useless to try to avert his fate. His cruel enemy took this opportunity to suggest to his mind that he had so disgraced himself that it would be better to get rid of his life at once, frequently the end of drunkards. The razor was in his hand,—but the Spirit of the Lord interposed, and the weapon fell to the ground. Still the enemy pursued him. One day,

after having been brought into great weakness, through intemperance, death appeared to be very near, and his awful state more terrific than ever. Not a moment was to be lost; he cast himself once more at the footstool of his long-insulted Creator, and, with an intensity of agony, cried out, 'What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.' He sank down exhausted: he could say no more. *That prayer was heard*, and a voice from heaven seemed to reply, '*I will help thee*.' I have seen thy struggles, and I will now say to thine enemy, Hitherto thou hast come, but *no further*.'

"A physician was consulted as to the probability or possibility of medicine being rendered effectual to stop the disposition of intemperance. The physician boldly declared that if this poor slave would strictly adhere to his prescription, not only the practice, but the very inclination for strong drink would subside in a few months. Every bottle was taken with earnest prayer to God for his blessing to accompany it. He commenced taking this medicine on the first week in March 1816, and continued till the latter end of September following; and to the honour and glory of the Lord God Almighty, who sent his angel to whisper in the poor man's ear, 'I will help thee,'—for the glory of God be it spoken, that from the latter end of September 1816 to the present hour, not so much as a spoon-

ful of spirituous liquor, or wine of any description, has ever passed the surface of that man's tongue.

"The narrative which I have thus detailed might appear almost as a fable, a tale, got up for effect, but every syllable is *truth*; and, to the glory and honour of the Lord God Almighty, the man who has been so marvellously delivered is now in perfect health, the happy servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he who has been plucked as a brand from the burning, and delivered from the power of Satan, NOW STANDS BEFORE YOU, and it is from HIS lips that you have heard the goodness of that God whose mercy endureth for EVER."

I wish the author of *The Sinner's Friend*, and not his son, to speak in this narrative. With what appeal then can I conclude better than with his own:—"Sinner! this little book is for YOU, to give you hope and comfort, joy and peace. Only believe in the willingness of God to forgive *every penitent* sinner, and pray earnestly to him for mercy, and rest assured that if you are truly penitent, *not else*, he *will* pardon you (yes, even you), for the sake of his beloved Son.

"Look up, then, poor polluted sinner, whoever thou art, or however deeply thou mayest have sinned against God. Look up and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt assuredly be saved, for he himself has declared that he came to save such as YOU. Repent, therefore, that thy sins may be *blotted out*."

(Abridged from
Memoir by Rev. Newman Hall.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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JOHN CAMPBELL OF KINGSLAND.



(Frontispiece to "Travels in South Africa.")

JOHN CAMPBELL, familiarly known in his later life as "of Kingsland," died in London in 1840. He is an instance of one who sought to be useful to his fellow-men in every way.

possible way, and who got his heart's desire wonderfully granted, though his talents were not so remarkable as his grace. He may well claim notice in the *Monthly Visitor*, for he was the first publisher and the first distributor of tracts in Scotland, and helped to originate the Religious Tract Society in Edinburgh.

To this same good man the young people of our land are very greatly indebted; for it was he who may be said to have begun to write little books specially fitted for them. *Worlds Displayed* was the name of the first of these publications; and he soon started in addition *The Youth's Magazine*, about the year 1800.

His father, who was a native of Killin in Perthshire, died in Edinburgh when John was only two years old. While a lad he was apprenticed to a jeweller, but was afterwards in business as an iron-monger in the Grassmarket. It was in the midst of his common work that the Lord met him, and then thrust him forth into scenes of usefulness; just as he found the sons of Zebedee, not idle, but at their calling. So scrupulously honest and exact was he in money matters, that it is mentioned by a friend how annoyed he was for weeks at not being able to account for having in his possession "one shilling and sevenpence halfpenny" more than he supposed he ought to have had.

His awakening to concern about salvation began in the course of quiet attention to the word and ordinances. His heart's awful wickedness was discovered to him, and his alarm at the thought of being lost for ever became most agonizing. He tells us that "for three months he felt the terror of God so keenly, that a person who never waded these deep waters can have no more conception of them than of the glory of the third heavens." One thing that kept him in darkness was the idea

that he must pass through the experience of such as Bunyan, if he was really born again; and, even when relieved from his acute distress, it was long before he clearly saw the sinners' resting-place in Christ alone, apart from feeling and fear. But at length he was delivered from trust in self altogether. "How can any man think to be saved by his works? He might as soon swim to America. I have heard of a criminal who thought to escape the gallows by his gift of whistling; and this is as reasonable as the hope of many that their gifts will save them from hell." For a time, when getting into light, he tried to be "very humble," and he set himself to try to believe saving truth "very heartily;" all the while still giving self a place in seeking the warrant for a sinner's acceptance. And then, too, prayer was made a plea; and his hope hinged on what seemed to be done in him by the Spirit, rather than on what was done for him on the cross. He thought his heart must be softened, and warmed, and melted, and that then he might believe in the Lord Jesus, and apply his atoning blood.

He thus describes how he was brought into full light and liberty: "I beheld Jesus as the speaker in his word, and speaking to me. When he said 'Come,' I had no difficulty in replying 'Yes, Lord, thy pardoned rebel comes.' The following evening I had such a view of sovereign, pardoning, justifying, redeeming, unmerited mercy, that I was hardly able to bear it. So much was I overpowered with the magnitude of this discovery of boundless love and grace in Christ, that I felt a difficulty in breathing. I sat pensive, at one time beholding the pit from whence I was redeemed; at another, the hope to which I was raised."

He now knew what it was to have a melted and softened, a broken and

contrite spirit. His thoughts were fixed from hour to hour, not on himself or his darkness, but on Jesus and what he had done, suffered, and promised; and often on the love of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit.

He was helped by the famous John Newton's letters; and now became a correspondent of his, and then went up to London to visit him. Step by step he was led on to do more work for the Lord. He threw his energies into Sabbath-school work. He took part in societies that were beginning to work for the fallen. When such men as Rowland Hill and Robert Haldane came to Scotland, he could not stand aloof, though the prejudice against open-air preaching, and specially lay-preaching, was intense,—so bitter, indeed, that a strict and orthodox Christian acquaintance one Sabbath morning prayed that “a red-hot poker might be stuck into John Campbell's throat if he presumed that day to minister in word or doctrine.” How changed are things now! The Christian community now recognises the duty of every believer to say to his neighbour, “Know the Lord,” as did the early saints, who when scattered by persecution did not keep silence, but “went everywhere preaching the word.” (Acts viii. 2.)

Mr. Campbell began his Sabbath-school teaching at Loanhead, near Edinburgh, and his preaching at Gilmerton. Very soon he and his friends extended their efforts to other places; and a wonderful impulse was given to all this work by the visits of Rowland Hill. As in the days of John the Baptist, soldiers from the barracks and the castle came to hear, and many were converted. People were astonished. “Even soldiers,” it was reported, “attend a prayer meeting now!” A woman gravely said, “Oh, sir, what will become of us now, when the very soldiers are beginning to pray?”

He had training for the ministry, but not college training. But as God helped his plain, fervent addresses from village to village, he began to consider whether or not he might give himself wholly to this work. Soldiers and sailors were continually writing to him for advice, and for the supply of books and Bibles. Friends were raised up (such as John Newton, and Robert Haldane), who urged him to go on; and ere long he was set apart as pastor over an Independent congregation at Kingsland, in London, in 1803. There he ministered for seven and thirty years.

He had been blessed to souls in itinerating in his native Scotland; and he was blessed in London. But, occasionally, still he came down to visit the scenes of his early ministry. In 1812 he was induced to take a journey to a more distant region. His great good sense, his calm judgment, his loving, conciliatory spirit, and his fervent zeal, recommended him to the Directors of the London Missionary Society as a fit man to visit their stations in South Africa. So useful was he in this journey, that some years after he was asked to go forth on a like errand to the same region. He gained much for his own soul and his preaching by what he saw and heard; while he was also the instrument of touching the hearts of heathens. He wrote a very racy account of all his adventures, and of the opportunities given him of communicating the gospel, as well as of encouraging the missionaries that were at work. A letter of his, in 1819, to the great chief Africaner, who was long time a terror to all around, was blessed to make a deep impression, and so prepare that chief's mind for the after receiving of the gospel. “He gives samples of the preaching of converted Hottentots. One of them illustrated the soul's immortality by referring to what they all knew,—how the serpent once

a year strips itself of its skin, by pushing itself between two branches of a bush that are close to each other. "And," said he, "when we find the skin, we do not call the skin the serpent; no, it is only its skin: neither do we say the serpent is dead; no, for we know he is alive, and has only cast his skin." And so he tells how sometimes the simplest statement of the good news affected souls.

In his old age he was still at work in Kingsland, intent on winning souls, and often now looking forward to his departure. One of his letters tells that his habit was, on getting a Scotch newspaper, to look first at the list of *deaths*, "to see if any of his friends were gone." And then he says, "If a newspaper were published in heaven, none of its readers would ever think of looking for such a list in it, nor even for a chapter of accidents. It might contain lists of conversion to God, and of fresh arrivals in the haven of everlasting rest, and the rapture with which they cast their crowns of glory at the foot of the Lamb's throne; and how they were affected when Abraham whispered to them, '*You are to be here for ever!*' and how crowds of old fellow-pilgrims whom they knew on earth, flew to congratulate them on their arrival in glory."

As the day of his departure drew near, his letters deepened in the intensity of their solemn, yet cheerful tone. He wrote to a friend, "Death is a delightful subject to contemplate to believers;" but added, "To those who are not believers, it

is tremendously awful. Let us therefore *think* for eternity, *hear* for eternity, *write* for eternity, *read* for eternity, and *speak* for eternity."

He was troubled for a time by the thought that he had not "*done what he could*," and with tears sought the prayers of his people and friends. "Oh, I love to be near the blood of sprinkling. All I want is to feel my arm round the cross." Men asked if he believed he should go to heaven; his reply was, "I have no doubt of it." And then there would fall from his lips such sentences as these:—"A full and free salvation!" "How softly the waters flow!" "Let it fly, let the Gospel fly!" When his wife was standing by, and looking sadly on her beloved husband, he was able to say, "Don't grieve; *there is nothing melancholy in dying and going to glory.*"

He died on Saturday, 4th April 1840, aged 74. Some friends were in the room, and all stood round his bed; but he could not speak. The sun had just set, and the last gleams of light fell upon his bed. There was a sweet smile on his countenance, and just as one of his friends bent over him, he drew two or three short and rapid breaths, and then lay silent. Again he breathed quickly, and smiled; then heaved a gentle sigh, and all was over. In the hush of evening he had slipped out of the body into glory.

Dear reader, when the Saturday night of your life comes, shall it be thus with you? Shall friends stand by and calmly whisper to each other, "He has gone to be with Christ!"—till the day break, the Resurrection-day.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1883.

THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS.



"THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD." Yes; but

I. *It is an easy way to enter on.* To begin a course of wrong-doing is not hard,—it is one of the easiest things a human being can do. It is done as easily as a stream of water runs down hill. So that when a man begins to go astray, his course is truly spoken of as a *going down*; for

this reason, among others, that the thing can be done with so little effort or difficulty.

Reader, do we not find ourselves constantly tending unto new paths of error, always verging upon some forbidden line? How many of our transgressions, too, are not premeditated? They come upon us without our asking, or anticipation,

like the changes in the weather, and cost as little effort almost as the drawing of our breath.

One who really hates falsehood will often say in secret disgust of himself, "Is it possible that I have told my friend a lie?" The path of strict truth was even to him so slippery, that he had slid a good way down before he discovered, with amazement, that he had moved at all.

So will religious persons glide sometimes into formalism, or hypocrisy, before the faintest suspicion of transgression has crossed their mind. Very likely, when they heard formalism and hypocrisy depicted in naked ugliness in public discourses, they judged it would be hard to fall into those sins; or, at any rate, they judged that the first steps would be easily realized and checked. They made the blunder of connecting the difficulty with the *entering* on the way of transgression, rather than with the *detecting* of oneself to be there.

It happens, accordingly, that multitudes of well-meaning persons fall an easy prey to habits of dishonesty and insobriety. They fatally imagine that it will cost them an effort to be unjust, or dissipated.

Was not this the error of the apostle Peter? "*Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.*" Hear how bravely this rock can pledge its firmness, and after a few hours, see this same rock weak as water! Peter thought it would be easier for the arch of heaven to fall, than for him to forsake his Master; and yet the denial had three times taken place, in spite of forewarnings too, before he knew it had been done. How subtle, how easy the transition from good to evil, from God to devil!

Reader, when we begin life in this world, the impulse to go wrong is both upon us and within us; and before we realize that our course is a downward one, we are already far

on our way to the doom that threatens us at the end of it. The transgressor's way is an easy way to enter on.

II. *It is a rough way to walk in.* It begins easy, but it grows hard. It may be the way is entered on with a delightful awakening of much joy and hope. The youth is glad when, from what seemed to him stagnation, he begins something like a brisk career. A spice of godlessness in his life redeems it, he thinks, from being dull. Mere movement is exhilarating, and being downhill, little effort is needed to keep it going. But gradually the transgressor feels an unpleasant sense of being cheated by the sin he delights in. He begins to curse it secretly, for he suspects it has a secret curse *for him*.

The school-boy feels the way hard when, dreading the discovery of one falsehood, he tries to cover it with many more. And when the erring boy has grown into the erring man of business, how tortured he is by fears, and beset by difficulties, which he never would have known had he paid due heed to the things that are true, honest, and just. To him the postman's knock, it may be, is like the crack of doom. Outwardly he may be calm, but his heart is a nest of tyrannical fears. Wherever he goes he carries with him a secret dread of catastrophe. He knows not but the next step he takes, or the next letter he receives, will bring it.

This is so in particular with the sinner who is ill-prepared to meet his God. The summons may come to him at any moment. The eye of the omniscient God is upon him. His guilt is no secret, though he would give a thousand worlds to make it so. Nor can he cast off the dreadful load which he carries with him unconfessed and unforgiven.

The leprous Gehazi, the tears of Peter, the sanguinary death of Judas, the more awful though bloodless end of Ananias and Sapphira, are all out-

standing signs of the truth, which every human being feels more or less, that though transgression is easy to enter on, it is a rough way to walk in.

But more than all, this is manifest in the Cross of Christ, where the meek and holy Saviour was "numbered with the transgressors,"—where he showed, as none but God could do, the hardness of the sinner's course, at the same time that he bore its curse, and opened a way for us to escape from it.

It is easy to enter on, it is hard to walk in, the way of transgressors.

III. *It is not easy to turn.* When one begins to feel the misery of some course of evil-doing, and begins to heap reproaches on himself, and you ask him why he does not leave it off at once, the only explanation he can give is often simply this,—that *he has begun*. "I don't care about it," he will say; "I don't like it; in fact, I detest it, I utterly abhor and loathe it; but I find it impossible to check myself, now that I have begun to move in the wrong direction."

Ah! it is the rolling-stone, downhill, whose further progress is certain from the mere fact of having begun to move at all. It is uphill work going back.

Thus many a drunkard is made, apart altogether from love of drink. He falls into the way of "tasting" like his neighbours. "I do it," he says at first, "because I will;" but afterwards, in a different tone, he says, "I will not, and yet I do it." Ah! it is easy to go down with the running stream; and when he would push himself against it, all the effort he can make seems to be entirely vain.

How easy it is to be remiss in prayer, in Scripture reading, in private or public worship! how hard it is to resume the old excellent way again, if the current has once set in towards neglect and carelessness!

These words of the apostle Paul in-

dicate that he had a hard struggle: "The good I would, I do not; the evil I would not, that I do;" and he speaks of the law in his members warring against the law in his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. Mark, in connection with this, his urgent cry of despair, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And mark, also, how in a moment he recovers himself, and exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans vii. 19, 24, 25.)

Reader, there is hope here for you too. God works miracles of grace. And these are wrought through Christ. There is nothing too hard for grace to do. If it turned Zaccheus, and saved the thief on the cross, and made "the chief of sinners" into one of the brightest of apostolic saints, surely no one in quest of salvation need despair.

Still, be it remembered that while by the grace of God it is possible to turn, the turning nevertheless is not to be expected apart from the agony of effort described in Scripture as "resisting unto blood, striving against sin." (Hebrews xii. 4.)

In the way of transgressors, it is not easy to turn.

IV. *It is harder to go on.* Never did more dreadful words fall from human lips than those of Jesus, when he spoke of the final penalty of sin. He spoke of it as the undying worm, and the fire unquenchable. The nature of the penalty, and the duration of it, are alike awful. He shows us, also, both how hard it is to turn, and how much harder to go on, when he says that we had better, while we may, escape the fire, enter into life, after a large sacrifice,—by cutting off a right hand or foot, or plucking out a right eye,—after terrible suffering,—than not enter into life at all. (Matthew v. 29, 30.)

Reader, if you strive to turn to the Lord, you have the sympathy and

help of Jesus ; and if there is abounding sin, there is superabounding grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) Be sure, however hard it may be to turn, it is harder to go on. Just as the speed increases while the stone rolls down, so in the sinner's case the curse accumulates, and he grows less and less able to bear it.

Now, when we look from this to the pleadings of God, in his infinite pity and tenderness, the wonder is that any will still continue to go on. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.)

There is hope for the penitent. There is a way back for the prodigal ; so that, remembering the provisions of divine mercy and grace, he can say, "In my Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger : I will arise and go !" (Luke xv. 17, 18.)

It is not easy to turn in the way of transgressors ; it is yet harder to go on.

V. It is impossible to stand still. The course of time rolls on unceasingly. So it is with the tenor of your life. You are ever growing better or worse,—making progress in the way of life or of death,—tending to God, or away from him. There is no halting even while you hesitate ; but always and everywhere your nature goes on, for good or evil, in the course in which you have set it going.

In old times, Elijah lifted up his voice and cried to the people of Israel, "How long halt ye between two opinions ? If the Lord be God, follow him." (1 Kings xviii. 21.) That was a strong appeal, and a very reasonable one. But it did not imply that the people were at a dead stand. What roused the indignation of the prophet was, that they were idly thinking about making a change without actually doing it, when there was the most urgent need for doing it. And the people, while thus feebly hesitating, were going on headlong to their ruin.

Ah ! how many go on to destruction pleasing themselves with the thought that they have a wish to be saved ! What madness there is in hoping to be less indolent to-morrow, if the soul is too idle to come to Christ to-day !

Reader, do you think you are not much of a transgressor ? As regards outward sin, perhaps it is true. But if the roots of evil are ever growing in you, they will burst out into sad productiveness some day. Beware ! There is no help, or hope, but in Christ. He is your Sin-bearer ; your Deliverer. Flee to him. He is the way,—the way back to God and heaven,—the true and living way ; the way of peace, to conscience, heart, and mind. Thus flee to him, and follow him ; then your path, henceforth, will be the path of the just, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. There will be blessed progress in every step you take, and glory at your journey's end. (Prov. iv. 18, 19.)

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THE GIFT OF LIFE.

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—ROM. vi. 23.



READER, eternal life is not a *gain* of yours, but a *gift* of God. If you do sin-work, you get death for wages; but no work of yours can gain eternal life for wages. "Not of works, lest any man should boast;" "it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

To value a gift, one must feel himself in need of it. A warm coat is not so well prized in summer weather

as when the keen frost comes round. If you are sick, or not hungry, it would be a thankless benevolence that would set rich food before you. Feeling no craving, you would not relish the gift. It is the same with the gift here offered. It is meant for dying people. Eternal life is worth nothing to a man who fancies he is in no danger of death. Set life before

him, and he sets it past him, as one would do a cup of water if he were not thirsty.

There are at least five classes who may be called sin-sick, and yet feel no hunger for eternal life. John Bunyan gives us their names: Simple, Sloth, Presumption, Formality, Hypocrisy.

Simple is a man who sees no danger of death, and calls it "cant" if you speak about eternal life to him. Generally he has a good share of this world's goods, enjoys tolerably good health and comfort, mixes in good society, and has a fair business: and what more does he need? Death is out of the question with him altogether. He "is not going to be hanged to-morrow." He takes it, therefore, as something like an insult to himself, and as unnecessary trouble on the part of God or man, to press upon him the gift of eternal life. "Soul," says he to himself, "thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God says, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Sloth is a man of different temper. He takes in all you say about life and death, as a speaking trumpet would do from your lips, and be just as much impressed. He acknowledges it to be true when you tell him that death is as near him all his life long as the next moment; but then he is in such a dozing and stupefied state that the truth has as little power over him as if he believed it to be a lie. He knows that the king of terrors is ravaging in the very street where he lives, and has been spoiling his neighbour's house even, and yet he quietly turns over on his other side, saying, "A little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands together," until, in a moment when he thinketh not, that last and everlasting enemy is upon him, when there is no use in resisting, and no hope of escape.

Presumption, again, is a man who thinks it none of your business to speak to him about eternal life. This man will confer with you as to meats and drinks, and will even thank you and follow your advice if you recommend this or that as wholesome food; but if you presume to take an interest in his immortal soul, and commend to him that glorious gospel which has revived and dignified your own, he tells you to mind your own business and he will attend to his; and you may be sure that the man who will give you that answer will, in effect at least, give the same "put off" to God when he holds out to him the free gift of eternal life.

Formality is a man who thinks he has got, or may soon get, eternal life by a good and orthodox behaviour. He has great respect for strict rules of conduct, and expects eternal life rather as a reward for adherence to them than as a free unmerited gift of God. He thinks to win eternal life as a wage. And the work he does for that wage is not heart-work in holiness; for, finding he can do little there, he tries to do all he can where he feels able, vainly imagining that God will not look inside the cup if the outside be clean. When you press the gift of God on such a man, he will no doubt thank you for the trouble, but hint that you are surely mistaking him for somebody else who is a glutton, or a drunkard, or a profane swearer, or Sabbath breaker, or church-deserter.

Hypocrisy is a man who is all that could be wished, in every respect—except that he wants sincerity. Speak to him of life and death as long and as often as you please, and he will always listen attentively. If you recommend humility, he will appear humble,—holiness, he will appear holy,—prayer, he will seem to pray. Tell him he is spiritually a dead man, and he confesses himself dead in trespasses and sins; or tell him he should

be a new creature, walking in newness of life, and he acknowledges his new birth and new obedience. But the worst of it is, the thing is all a sham. In reality, he has neither the dread of death nor the desire of life. Offer him the gift of God, and although he has no sense of need for such a thing, yet he will appear to take it gladly as if it were to save his life, whilst he is only thinking to save his reputation. "Ye hypocrites," says Jesus, "how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Reader, do not pity these classes for their folly, unless you have neither part nor lot with them yourself, for then your own folly in pitying them will be greater than theirs. Consider now what that is which these classes esteem so lightly.

It is called *eternal life*. Life here does not mean mere existence. In that sense, all, both good and bad, have the gift already, for they shall never cease to exist. All men go down into the grave; but that is not death. All men shall rise again; but that is not life. Death really means a state of uttermost wretchedness; and so life does not mean mere existence, but a perfectly blessed existence. And if that blessedness be never disturbed, it is eternal life. This is what mankind is ever searching after,—every one digging his own empty well, or scooping out his own broken cistern. The universal cry is, "What shall I do?" The divine answer is, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

This gift consists mainly of pardon, love, new obedience, peace, heaven.

Pardon is the first need of a sinner, and without it there can be no experience of eternal life. A man's sins will never let him go unpunished. Indeed, they are essentially a part of himself; they go where he goes, and dwell with him where he dwells. They make it dark for him in the daylight, and spread a bed of thorns

for him at night. They are within him the worm that never dies, and the fire unquenchable. What life or happiness can that be? But when God pardons, sin lets go its grip. Henceforth it eats up its own poison, and dies that very death it was bringing upon the sinner. Therefore, being pardoned, we are dead to sin, and sin is like a dead body to us, which we will get rid of as soon as we can. We are freed from its filthiness as well as its fangs, and, being dead, it has no more dominion over us. We live anew.

Love. Like pardon, this is the gift of God. He gives a new heart as well as a peaceful conscience. We are born with a stony heart, as loveless and therefore as lifeless as a stone. But when God gives pardon, he gives also a new heart inflamed with that great love wherewith he first loved us. So that the pressure of the sin-burden *in upon us* is exchanged for an exceeding force of love pressing *out from us* to God and our neighbour. This love is its own reward. It may suffer, and suffer long, but its happiness never suffers. Like God himself, whose name is love, it is always and everywhere the same, in all ages, ranks, conditions. And so, being one itself, it makes all one like itself. This one band makes all the redeemed one body in the Lord. To feel drawn by its cords is life and happiness. The child who feels it has lived longer than the patriarch who feels it not. This makes the dunghill better than a palace, and the beggar happier than a king, and death brighter than the sun and as stingless as an angel, and the grave as welcome as the gate of paradise.

New obedience. If the fruit be unto holiness, the end is everlasting life. Good works do not purchase salvation, but there will be no salvation without them. If there be the love of God *in you*, there will be the

works of God *by* you. A sin-lover is a sin-worker, and so a lover of God will be a servant of God. Ye cannot love God and serve the devil. "If ye love me," said Jesus, "keep my commandments." Now notice that new obedience is newness of life. Life means work. Every living man is a worker, and a hard worker. His heart at any rate is never idle. And as the natural life works against the will of God, its fruit is dead works; that is, works that beget death or misery. The wages of sin is death. But when the natural life is converted to work the will of God, it begets that same kind of happiness which God has in his works. A fellow-worker with God must be a fellow-sharer of his blessedness, and that is eternal life.

Peace. "Learn of me," under my yoke, says Jesus, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He says this in answer to the cry of the weary, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." Unbroken peace is eternal life. But that peace can be got without the wings of a dove, or change of locality. It is the gift of God, here and now. It is inward peace, and independent of everything but of God who gives it. The earth may remove, but cannot take it away. The hills may tremble, but cannot shake it. The fires of persecution may consume this frail tabernacle in which it dwells, but cannot disturb its divine repose. "*My peace*," says Jesus, "I leave with *you*."

Heaven. Notice how much this implies. It implies a sense of the presence

and fellowship of our Father, and our Elder Brother, and a united family. It implies holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. It implies the knowledge and possession of every divine feature so far as we are capable. It implies the sweetest company, the most delightful residence, the noblest occupations, the most rapturous enjoyments, and the most certain continuance and security of all these things. It means the most loving intimacy with the divine personalities, the most wondrous revelations of their doings in the past, and the most glorious prospects of their purposes in the future. Reader, if that be not life eternal, what else can be worthy of the name?

The year is almost at a close. Its last month has come. You may not live to see its last day. But these things warn you that there is a last day, a last hour for you in this world. How precious eternal life should be to dying souls! It is a gift—the gift of God. How often, during this year, has it been offered you? How often rejected? Oh, give the passing year something good to testify concerning you—something better than it ever had. You are determined to be saved: You will seek salvation till you find it. While God offers it as a gift, you know that on your part you must struggle to lay hold on it. You will strive, you will agonize to make it yours. And not in vain. "He that seeketh findeth." It is found through Christ, and these are his encouraging words: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1884

THE BURIAL OF THE WICKED.

A WORD FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this also is vanity."—ECCLES. viii. 10



See page 3.

THE following words are a good text for the New Year: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Num. xxiii. 10.) There are not many in our dying world who have not, at least in their hearts, breathed that prayer. But

how often has it been breathed in vain! It has gone forth from the lips like vapour into the silent air, vanishing away, and the next moment forgotten.

The prayer is a good one, though spoken originally by an unbelieving

tongue. But faith can take it up, and lay it believably and earnestly upon the throne of the divine grace, where the sprinkled blood pleads for the weakest and most sinful suppliant, making his poorest cry irresistible.

One of our old Scottish ministers, 200 years ago, lay dying. At his bedside were several of his beloved brethren, watching his departure. Opening his eyes, he spoke to them these singular words: "Fellow-passengers to glory, how far am I from the New Jerusalem?" "Not very far," was the loving answer, and the good man departed, to be with Christ.

"I'm dying," said one of a different stamp, "and I don't know where I'm going." "I'm dying," said another, "and it's all dark." "I feel," said another, "as if I were going down, down, down!" "A great and a terrible God," said another, three times over; "I dare not meet him."

"Stop that clock!" cried another, whose eye rested intently on a clock which hung opposite his bed. He knew he was dying, and he was unready. He had the impression that he was to die at midnight. He heard the ticking of the clock, and it was agony in his ear. He saw the hands, minute by minute, approaching the dreaded hour, and he had no hope. In his blind terror he cried out, "Stop that clock!" Alas! what would the stopping of the clock do for him? Time would move on all the same. Eternity would approach all the same. The stopping of the clock would not prepare him to meet his God. It was the cry of despair; of an unprepared sinner about to plunge into the everlasting darkness—hopeless and cheerless, as if the worm that never dies had already taken hold of him.

And all this terror might have been spared, and these dark prospects turned into sunshine. But darkness was chosen rather than light, till it was too late—for ever too late! The

way into the kingdom had been open to him all his days, but he would not go in. The friendship of God had been proposed to him, but he would not accept it. The Holy Spirit had striven with him for years, but he resisted and quenched him. Life eternal had been presented to him—nay, pressed upon him, as the free gift of God, to be had simply for the taking; but he would not have it. Deliverance from the wrath to come had been offered him freely, as the result of a believed gospel; but the gospel was to him an idle tale. Partnership with Christ in all that glory which belongs to him as the Son of God he might have had, and heirship of the undefiled inheritance, simply in receiving the Father's testimony to the Son; but that testimony he despised.

And now, when dying, he shrinks from the doom which he had so long braved; and in his despairing agony he cries out, "Stop that clock!" Was this all his hope? Ah, truly "his hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be as a spider's web," (Job viii. 14;) "the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine." (Job xviii. 5.)

It is about the "burial of the wicked" that the wise man speaks—the burial of one who had "come and gone from the place of the holy," ("of the holy One,") who had hundreds of times entered the temple, seen the altar and the sacrifice, heard Israel's songs of praise, and learned something concerning the way into the holiest by the blood of the Substitute: yet, after all, had turned round and gone "to his own place."

Solemn as is the burial of the righteous, far more solemn is the burial of the wicked. Yet how few think of it, or try to realize it! What a difference between the burial of Moses and the burial of Balaam—both in the same month; both upon the same mountains; both within sight of Jerusalem.

As funeral after funeral passes by, from day to day, how seldom do we ask, Where is that dead man's soul? "Have you been to hear a sermon to-day?" said a friend to George Herbert. "No; but I met one." "Met one, how was that?" "I met a funeral." These are the daily sermons to which so few give ear.

But what of the funeral of the wicked of which the wise man speaks?

Some would say, there is no difference between one funeral and another. Outwardly we know there is none. In all there is the coffin, the hearse, the pall, the mourners, the procession, the grave-yard, the deep, dark, silent tomb. And is this all? Is there no difference? Solomon evidently thought there was a mighty difference, when, as one overwhelmed with a most solemn spectacle, he says, "I saw the wicked buried." It was a sight not to be forgotten; a sight fitted to draw tears from every believing eye. The funeral of the wicked! There is something in the very words that strikes us with awe. The funeral of the wicked! What does it mean? What lies beyond it? Into what region is the dead man ushered? The body goes to pieces and mingles with the dust. But the soul, what becomes of it? It is a vessel capable of infinite joy or sorrow, made originally for God himself—what is its doom and its dwelling? "The spirit returns to God who gave it;" and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Man cannot distinguish between the two classes. No one can say whether the pall-bearers are angels or devils. If they did, how solemn would our funeral processions be! The dust into which they both moulder is the same. The turf which covers them is as green over the one as over the other. An old gravedigger was in the habit of sowing white clover on the graves of the

little ones he buried. He said he was "quite sure of *them*." But he dare not be so sure of others. So the white patches remained singular. But if he could have discerned between the righteous and the wicked, if he could have unerringly sown his white clover over the former, what a strange spectacle would the grave-yard have presented!

The whole history of the wicked, that is, of the man who has lived without a hope in Christ, is sad: his birth, his life, his trials, his sick-bed, his death-bed, his grave, his resurrection! All, how sad! He, too, has come and gone from the place of the holy. He has professed Christ, he has read his Bible, he has worshipped in the sanctuary, he has perhaps sat down at a communion table; but *he never knew God*, nor loved the Son of God, nor trusted in his cross, nor followed his footsteps! He had light, but he preferred the darkness. He knew the truth, but he did it not. He listened to the gospel, but he believed it not. He read the Bible, but he profited not. He had Sabbaths, but they were all in vain. He might have been saved, but he would not. He might have walked in the narrow way, but he preferred the broad.

And now it is all over! That is his funeral! Life is gone: pleasure is ended; hope is past; his day of grace completed; despair begun; eternity bursting on him! "Lost, lost!" this is the cry that comes up out of his tomb; and on his tomb-stone is written, VANITY! A wasted life! A lost soul! A lost heaven! A lost Christ! A doomed eternity! Oh, vanity of vanities! Oh, worse than vanity of vanities,—the blackness of darkness for ever, lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

Yet the message still goes forth, "Why will ye die?" Why should such a funeral be yours? Will you not turn and live? The God who

made you has sworn by himself that he has no pleasure in your death! *Why will you persist in dying?* Why will you fling away your immortality? Why will you not accept the proffered life from the hands of the Son of God?

The funeral of the wicked! Can there be a sadder sight? Yet, is it a strange or uncommon thing? If so common, then we ask, Why is it so? Why should it be so? Is there not enough of life in the Prince of Life to prevent such a woful end? MUST men die the death of the wicked? Is there no remedy?

There is. Yes, there is a remedy, divine and sure; a remedy by which death is turned into life, and the grave turned into a place of rest and hope. Yet few there be who find this. The multitudes, both poor and rich, refuse it, and brave the gloom of such a sorrowful funeral.

The remedy comes from THE GRAVE—the grave of the righteous One. It is the tomb of the Son of God that proclaims deliverance from death, the first and second death. No need now for any son of Adam to perish, seeing Christ has conquered the grave, and turned the funeral of every one who believes on him into a triumphal procession. The Christ, the Prince of Life, has died the just for the unjust. He who is the resurrection and the life has died, has been buried, has risen again. His empty grave proclaims to the dead in sins life and immortality!

Go, sinner, look into the grave of Christ, and see, not death, but life—not despair, but hope. See the great

ransom paid; see the penalty of sin borne; see the ashes of the mighty sacrifice, assuring you that God is satisfied with the offering, and that in Christ he is reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. (2 Cor. v. 19.) That empty grave is the pledge of resurrection, as well as of reconciliation, to every sinner who accepts God's testimony to the One Sacrifice, the one propitiation—"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Why then, O man, should the burial of the wicked be yours? And why should the resurrection of the wicked be yours—a resurrection unto shame and everlasting contempt? Will you not leave at once the unbelieving, thoughtless, pleasure-loving multitude, and join the bright company that move gladly along the narrow way which leadeth into life? This year may be thy last—this month may be thy last;—then make haste, there is but a step between thee and life; for "he that believeth is not condemned," (John iii. 18;) "he that believeth hath everlasting life," (vi. 47.)

"I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy One." Shall this be the story of your end? Shall this be the sad meditation of some godly friend returning from your funeral? Will you visit the death-bed of the Christless sinner? Can you calmly think of such a funeral as his becoming *yours*? Will you madly throw yourself into a tomb where there is no hope,—and out of which there is no escape, save to the resurrection of condemnation and eternal wrath?

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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ROBERT ANNAN OF DUNDEE.



"His was a lawless, fierce, and unmanageable nature, intensified by the vice of intemperance, to which he was addicted."—"He went back to the minister, and declared that the lion had now become a lamb."

See page 2.

ON Wednesday, 31st July 1867, a little boy fell into the water at Earl Grey's Dock, Dundee. On the alarm being given, Robert Annan, foreman to a timber merchant, who was at work near the spot, immediately threw off his coat, and plunged into

the water to save the child. The tide at this time was not quite full, but the current was running up very strong. Annan, however, being a first-rate swimmer, got hold of the drowning boy, and swam for the Craig Pier. One of the spectators,

named Daniel Anderson, observing that he seemed struggling with the current, sprang into the water and swam towards him. By this time he was pretty well up the harbour, and the boatmen employed at the Craig Pier were proceeding rapidly to his help, when a boat coming from the east side to assist in the rescue ran foul of the other, and before they could get near Robert Annan or those who were in the water, he sank. The boy, however, whom he had so gallantly upheld all this time, floated, assisted by Anderson; and one of the boats succeeded in rescuing them, both very much exhausted. The boy was soon afterwards able to walk home with his mother.

All available means that could possibly be made use of to recover the body of Annan were immediately tried, but without effect. About half-past eight o'clock in the evening it was found, close to the south end of the Craig Pier.

A brave and tender-hearted man, fond of the water himself, and, from long practice, almost as much at home in it as on shore, Robert Annan was ever ready to risk his own life for that of others. He had rescued no fewer than five children from the river and docks within the short space of twelve months, two of them in the course of a single week; and the boy Graham, whose life had now been saved by the sacrifice of that of his deliverer, was the sixth whom he had, within the year, saved from drowning. He left a wife and three young children to mourn the loss of a kind husband and a most affectionate father.

Robert Annan was born at Dundee, 5th October 1834. He was in many respects a remarkable character. To himself, the most notable thing that ever had occurred in this world was the great change effected upon his own soul, during the revival services in Dundee in 1860. Previous to that time, he lived a wild life. His was a

lawless, fierce, and unmanageable nature, intensified by the vice of intemperance, to which he was addicted. At last he went out to the United States of America, in the hope of being able to turn over a new leaf, in a new land, among new associates. In this he was disappointed. On one occasion, while there, he made a narrow escape. He was found lying insensible across a railway. The moment after he was lifted from the rails, an engine passed the spot.

He next went to Canada, and enlisted in the 100th regiment. He had not been long a soldier when he deserted. He then entered the Royal Navy, but had not been long aboard a man-of-war when he deserted the service, but afterwards gave himself up, and was punished. His relatives bought him off, and he returned to Dundee.

On his return, he was induced to attend the revival meetings at that time carried on in Kinnaird Hall by the Rev. J. M'Pherson, Mr. Duncan Matheson, and others. The arrows of conviction, on one of these occasions, penetrated deep into his soul. His state of mind was most deplorable. He said, "No man could have the faintest idea of the tortures which my guilty soul endured during that terrible time of darkness and despair." He went at one o'clock in the morning to the house of Mr. M'Pherson, minister of Hilltown Free Church. Mr. M'Pherson, from what he knew of the man, and seeing his haggard and desperate looks, became afraid that he meant to do him some injury. He asked Mr. M'Pherson, in the words of the Philippian jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" Mr. M'Pherson sat down and conversed with him. He then left, but for three days after, he could neither eat nor drink. His sins lay heavy upon him; but at length the light broke forth in the words, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

He went back to the minister, and declared that the lion had now become

a lamb. "I wish," he said, "to do something for Christ; give me some tracts." Mr. M'Pherson gave him some tracts. His first work was to proceed to the door of Bell Street Hall, where Barker, formerly a sceptic, was lecturing. Annan offered a tract to every one who entered. From that day he never ceased to labour for the salvation of others, his sympathies being strongest for the outcast and criminal class. He preferred addressing meetings in the open air. The coldest nights of winter found him, Bible in hand, addressing in a loud and terrible voice the poor creatures that gathered round him. His intense earnestness and manly style riveted their attention. Many tears have been shed by young and old around the places where Robert Annan used to stand.

As may be supposed, he became a member of Hilltown Free Church, and took an active interest in the spiritual prosperity of the congregation. His growth in grace, and spiritual progress, were rapid and steady. With a ready, willing, and child-like obedience, but with an iron determination, he led the forlorn hope and did the rough work of the missionary efforts of that church. He has stood calm, decided, and unmoved amidst the crowds of the Hilltown, exposed to all manner of insult and abuse. Dirt, mud, clods, stones, packages of soot, and packages of flour were flung at him, without having the least effect upon his temper. In this quarter he obtained the use of a shop at the top of William Street, where he held meetings almost nightly. Many were awakened, and numbers have professed to have been there converted, through the instrumentality of Robert Annan.

He was very humble, and exceedingly averse to speaking about his labours. His sympathies became deeper, and his spirit more softened, generous, and tender-hearted, even to womanliness; although, to look at

his strong, resolute, and manly form, and dogged-like aspect, one would have naturally been afraid of him. To one who had grievously insulted him, he said, "If it had not been for the grace of God I would have struck your head off; but, thank God, I can forgive you—I will pray for you."

His sympathy for suffering of every kind led to his efforts to rescue lives in danger of drowning. His wife was always afraid that he would himself be drowned in one of these efforts. But he said, "Can I stand aside and see fellow-creatures perish, while I have the power to save them?" Once, when swimming with a boy he had saved, at the very same spot where he was himself drowned, he appealed to the little fellow to "Look to Christ," "Take a hold of Christ—he will save you, he will save you." He had for some time a strong presentiment that he was to die soon, and was heard frequently saying, "As my time is short, I have the greater reason for being faithful to my Master."

Sometimes he would spend a whole night on his knees. On the morning of his death, he appeared more than usually impressed. He had risen at four o'clock, and been long in secret prayer. At breakfast time he hung out two large placards, pasted on boards, on each side of the door. The broad sheets were entitled "The Two Roads," with texts under the headings, "The Broad," "The Narrow," concluding, "*Where will you spend eternity?*" After family worship, he retired again for prayer, and as he left the house he took a piece of chalk and wrote the word "ETERNITY" on the pavement at the door. Two hours afterwards, he was *there*. And three days afterwards, standing on that very step, where the solemn word was still distinctly legible, prayer was offered by a minister, ere the company left the house to follow his body to the grave.

His death was felt in Dundee as a

public calamity. "Never," says an eye-witness, "did tears fall more fast and more freely than on that day in the 'but and ben' which had been the humble, happy home of Robert Annan. . . . As the hearse passed along the streets, every head was bared, and many were affected to tears. . . . In the Eastern Necropolis, large groups of women, all in mourning, were seen awaiting the funeral. . . . The first clods had scarcely been heard falling on the coffin, when several manly voices behind the crowd were heard singing the hymn, 'My Jesus, I love thee.'" The singing was instantly taken up by more than a thousand voices, male and female. The singing of the third verse was peculiarly thrilling. The hymn is as follows:—

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine,—
For thee all the pleasures of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour, art thou,—
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!

I love thee, because thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;
I love thee for wearing the thorns on thy brow:
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I will love thee in life, I will love thee in death,
And praise thee as long as thou lendest me breath;
And say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore thee in yon heaven of light;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

Hundreds lingered to whisper, and mourn, and sing, by the grave of Robert Annan. He will be missed by many. One man was found lying on the grave, and weeping. "I have been a very wicked man," he said, "but the grace of God, perhaps, will do for me what it did for Robert Annan. Noble Robert Annan! I wish I were like you!"

Christians! what are *we* doing for Christ? Is Christ in us a LIFE, as surely and as evidently as he was in Robert Annan? Say not that your talents are few, your hindrances many. Are you doing good *as you have opportunity*?

And for the slave of sin, what blessed tidings, if he will hear! Robert Annan the drunkard, whose drunkenness followed him across the Atlantic Ocean, into the army and the navy, and out of both—whom all other means had failed to reform—found the moral strength he needed when he found JESUS CHRIST,—
"*the power of God unto salvation*" to every one who believeth.

Reader, whoever you are, if yet out of Christ, surely, for a moment at least, what you have been reading is making you "stop and think." If you are ever to be saved, you must *one day* decide for Christ. And there is *now* but a step between you and death. Will you not, in the strength of God, decide NOW? Why may not that word of Jesus, which made Robert Annan a new man, bring life and peace also to *you*? "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

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THE OFFICER'S EXCHANGE.



THIS is a day when serious matters, as they are called, and rightly so called, are turned to ridicule. But it is the laughter of fools, which, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, may drown every other noise for the time, but soon dies away into the stillness of the grave.

I may listen to the voice of pleasure, till I can laugh at the fear of

judgment, but the judgment impends none the less.

The retribution will come. God is not mocked.

The man of the period may laugh away concern, but he cannot laugh away the coming judgment.

But Captain E. thought he could. Life to him looked fair indeed. He had brilliant prospects. An elegant

man, a man of refinement, and highly connected, attached to a fashionable regiment, which was under orders to proceed to India; every door was open to him.

Can you and I *blame* him for yielding to the attractions of society? Then let me begin by bringing myself to book, for we have turned every one his own way, and this is not God's way.

Every one was going the same road, or every one was, that he was taught to think had any idea about the matter. There was no harm, at least he did not intend any. A fellow must enjoy himself.

Easily he went on from step to step on the downward road. An easy path! Those on before beckoning him on, too; those behind thrusting him forward. All, all gone astray—going still away. Away from life, in seeking life; away from pleasure, in seeking pleasure: life and pleasure that must die, and cease to glitter in the grave, eagerly pursued by thoughtless, inconsistent man! Life and pleasure which know no end ruthlessly trodden under foot, or flippantly flung aside!

The regiment, under orders to proceed to India, was now embarked, and soon was received with open arms by European residents in that eastern empire.

The sweets of oriental life were soon tasted; the sour was yet to come, but, out of sight out of mind. Intoxicated with pleasure, Captain E. pursued his reckless way.

An eligible match was arranged. He was married. Now he would settle down. Settle down to what?

Alas for resolutions! Habit is second nature. New ropes are easier broken than old habits!

Habituated to worldliness, and surrounded by vicious influences, possessed, like you and me, of a deceitful and incurably wicked heart, he speedily returned to his former course.

His home was neglected, his wife forsaken; and verily he behaved so indecently, that she was obliged to seek a separation and return to Europe.

Undaunted still, he went on; "received" by society, which, to hide her own shame, winks at the shame of others. Nothing to awaken a thought of the reaping time to come.

"It's the pace that kills." He ran hard, but he had to yield at last.

Thank God, his health gave way, and not his life,—or the sequel to this history had never been told.

Many are the warnings sent, but how few are warned by them! Many lose their lives, and lose their souls as well, in the vain hope of a time of repentance to be allowed yet in the future. All have not lingering deathbeds. Nor indeed do many consider that their last opportunity has come—before it is gone. Experience, like the stern light of a ship, too often throws its light upon the wake. Then, how true are Jehovah's words through Elihu, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." (Job xxxiii. 14.) It is not that you and I do not hear the voice, but we do not understand the meaning.

So it was with Captain E. He became very ill, but he did not want to die.

This was his only care.

It was not that he thought of having sinned against God, and that his sin needed atonement. It was not that he was anxious now about where he should spend eternity. His soul gave him no concern. *He did not want to die.* He wanted to get better, that he might enjoy the world again.

He obtained leave of absence, and came to England.

Though he had forgotten God, God had not forgotten him.

How different the return, to the departure! He had left England in

the vigour of manhood and the elasticity of youth; he returns with a worn-out frame and a weary body. "The way of transgressors is hard."

He sought the mild climate of Devonshire, and surely the guiding hand of the Lord led him to T——th. He took lodgings near the sea. This was too cold. He moved farther into the town, and lodged in the house of an earnest Christian's nephew. He became worse. He got uneasy about his health. He then started for Madeira, thinking the climate there would restore him.

But he was not happy or comfortable. Somehow he longed, with the inexplicable longing of a sick man, for his native land, and the lodgings he had just left. He returned to them.

He grew worse and worse. The doctor who attended him at length said, "Would you like to have some one come and read to you?"—a polite way of telling him there was no hope of his recovery. He consented.

The doctor, knowing the uncle of his patient's landlord was an earnest Christian man, asked him to visit Captain E. He called, and was abashed at seeing the elegant invalided officer.

"What do you wish read, sir?" he asked.

"Anything you like."

His visitor read of man's fall.

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

"All under sin, as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is *none* that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," etc., down to verse 19, "that all the world may

become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 9–19.)

The officer listened attentively, and said, "Mr. B., what you read is an exact likeness of me."

This was all new to him. He had not looked at life from God's standpoint. He had not thought he had been *sinning*.

Where is the man that does? Men call it pleasure!

No one says, "I am going in for a lot of *sin*! I mean to enjoy *sin*! *Sin* is so pleasant!" They substitute the milder form of expression, and say "pleasure."

Next evening the visitor called again, and this time read of God's denunciations of sin, and the officer listened attentively.

"The wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.)

"The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 20.)

"Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.)

"He will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 7.)

A third evening he called, and now read God's invitations to the sinner.

"Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 18.)

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.)

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John vii. 37.)

When Mr. B. rose to leave, the Captain begged him not to go. He had at length awakened to his real condition.

Not time, but eternity, occupied his attention. Not how to get better, but how to get saved. He saw he was a ruined, lost sinner.

The Spirit of God had convinced him of sin through God's word read by his visitor.

Mr. B. sat down, and they conversed together, every time he rose to go the Captain entreating just for a few more words.

What a proof of the REALITY of his concern. Alas! what *unreality* there often is in this matter.

How many say, "Oh yes, of course I am anxious to be saved."

Yet they say it with the smile of indifference on their face. *They* never press you to stay. *They* never continue the conversation about eternity when it flags.

At twelve o'clock Mr. B. said he really must go. Mrs. B. was all alone, and he must not leave her any longer.

But, thank God, though Mr. B. left, the Spirit did not.

When he begins to deal with a soul, he continues until the work is accomplished. And it is he alone that can convince of sin, as it is he alone that can reveal Jesus to the heart.

Blessed be God, if he has begun with you and me, he will not leave until he has shown us Jesus. God help us to follow his leadings! May we look where he points! May we behold the *Lamb of God*.

He does not point *within* to feelings, but *without* to Christ. Even as he convinces of sin *by the word*, so he reveals the Saviour *by the word*—the faithful word of the faithful God.

Many an anxious one says, "Oh, I cannot see my way."

The reason is simply because they

do not get *in the way of the Holy Spirit's leading*. They do not take up God's own word, and say to themselves, "Now here, through these pages, I shall see Jesus. Here he has revealed himself. I want nothing more than his own word." For then they would be able to say, "I being *in the way*, the Lord led me."

So it was with the Captain. In childlike simplicity he went over the ground where Mr. B. had led him. He viewed his own "likeness," as he himself termed it. An unflattering reflection, but true to the life. As true of us as of him, did pride not blind the eye.

He heard again the sentence of God against sin, and trembled. And as he trembled, "God be merciful to me a sinner," came from his broken heart. And even then he heard again the "Come unto ME, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.)

He let himself go, and sweetly rested in that love which had been waiting for him all through those sin-wasted years.

Next day his visitor called, and before he had time to speak, the Captain exclaimed, "Mr. B., I have found peace."

"Then, sir, let us thank God together." And his praises were heard right through the house.

Thus the wanderer was found. And thus, too, must you and I be found, if we would join Captain E. and all the blood-washed number, in His presence where there is fulness of joy.

J. C. R.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MAY 1884.

JOHN NEWTON.



See page 3.

THE Rev. John Newton, whose birth seems to bear the date of 1725, was the son of a godly mother. But she was soon taken away from him, dying when he was in his seventh year. His father married again, and young Newton was sent to a boarding-school, where he "mingled with carelessness and profane children, and soon earned their ways."

In his twelfth year, his father, who commanded a merchant-vessel, took him with him to sea. Once or twice he was seriously impressed by books which fell in his way. "But all this goodness had no solid foundation, and hence it soon passed away, like the morning cloud or early dew." His last reform, when about the age of sixteen, was the most remarkable.

"For months," he says, "it might be said that, 'according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.'" After this he fell in with a book of sceptical philosophy, which operated like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed.

He was sent on a visit to some friends in Kent, and on the very first sight of one of the daughters in the family, then not fourteen years of age, he was impressed with an affection for her, of which he says, that "in degree it equalled all that the writers of romance have imagined; in duration it was unalterable." This extraordinary affection was made a means, in the providence of God, a few years after, of drawing him out of the pit of defilement into which he had fallen.

After one voyage to the Mediterranean, he returned to London. Shortly after, he was taken by the press-gang, and sent on board a man-of-war. His father gained for him an appointment as midshipman. "Here," he says, "I met with companions who completed the ruin of my principles."

His ship was bound for the East Indies, whither he dreaded going, because so far from England. At Madeira he succeeded in getting exchanged into a ship bound for the coast of Guinea. In this vessel evil principles soon led to evil practices. "I sinned," he says, "with a high hand, and made it my study to tempt and seduce others also."

He found employment and a master at the Plantanes, three islands near Sierra Leone. But his master's wife took a dislike to him. The fever of the country seized upon him, and he was to a great extent in this woman's power. Often he could not procure a drink of water to relieve his thirst. When he got over the fever, and his appetite returned, he was left so destitute of food that he often had to steal out by night, to dig up roots to appease his hunger.

While in this deplorable condition,

he wrote home more than once or twice, and his father took measures to instruct a captain of a vessel then about to sail from Liverpool, to seek for and to bring his son home.

Meanwhile, transferred to a less hard master, and in despair of ever returning to England, he tried to find happiness in Africa. But it was not God's purpose that he should "live and die a wretch in Africa." The captain from Liverpool inquired for him at the Plantanes, but Newton was more than a hundred miles off, on a different part of the coast. "In February 1747," Mr. Newton writes, "my fellow-servant, walking down to the beach, saw a vessel sailing past, and made a smoke in token of trade. She had already passed, and the captain hesitated to stop. At last the vessel dropped her anchor, and the captain came on shore." One of the first inquiries he made was about young Newton, who was close at hand. Mr. Newton adds, "The remembrance of M. C——, the hope of seeing her, and still greater hopes, prevailed over all other considerations. I embarked, and in a few hours lost sight of Kittam."

While on the African coast he distinguished himself, he tells us, "by a course of the most horrid impiety and profaneness. Not contented with common oaths and imprecations," he says, "I daily invented new ones, so that I was seriously reprov'd by the captain, who was himself not at all circumspect in his expressions. He would often tell me, that to his great grief he found that he had a Jonah on board, and that a curse attended me wherever I went."

In January 1748 the ship commenced her homeward voyage. On the 10th of March she was overtaken by a storm, which very quickly made a mere wreck of her. All hands were sent to the pumps, for the vessel was in danger of sinking. Happening to hear the captain exclaim, "If this

will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us!" young Newton's conscience smote him with the question, "What mercy can there be for thee?" While he stood at the helm for several hours, in silence, and almost in despair, all his past life rose before him. He thought that, supposing the Scriptures to be true, there never had been, or could be, such a sinner as himself.

About six in the evening it was announced that the ship was free from water. A gleam of hope arose in his mind. He tried to pray. Soon the promise to send the Holy Spirit was brought to his memory, and he began to ask with earnestness for this gift. His sceptical reasonings did not all at once vanish; but, he says, "Upon the gospel scheme I saw at least a peradventure of hope; while on every other side there was nothing but black despair."

Thus praying, doubting, hoping, and meditating, the ship drew near the end of her voyage. Her provisions had been exhausted; and when, on the 8th of April 1748, she anchored in Lough Swilly in Ireland, the last morsels of food were boiling in the pot.

Newton had now reached his native land, and his first public act was to engage himself, with solemnity and earnestness, to be for ever a servant of God. His father had just left England for Hudson's Bay, as Governor of Fort York, where he died. Before his departure he had visited Kent, and given his consent to the marriage, which, after some delay, took place in February 1750.

From 1748 until 1754 Newton was employed in commanding a ship; he was growing, all these years, both in self-knowledge and in a deeper acquaintance with the word of God. In 1755 he was appointed tide-surveyor at Liverpool, in which situation he remained until April 1764. His mind was gradually led towards the

ministry of the gospel; and, not feeling any very decided preference, he sought openings for usefulness both within and beyond the pale of the Church of England. Olney became at last his scene of labour, for about fifteen years.

Three years after his settlement in that town, the gentle William Cowper, the poet, went to Olney, where he was induced by his friendship for Mr. Newton to join him in the production of the "Olney Hymns."

At this period Mr. Newton was translated to the Church of St. Mary, Woolnoth, in the city of London, in the gift of his friend Mr. John Thornton. In that city he arrived towards the close of 1779, and preached his first sermon in his new church, on 19th of December, from Eph. iv. 15: "Speaking the truth in love."

Of his own feelings, on finding himself so placed, he often spoke. "That one of the most ignorant, most miserable, and most abandoned of slaves, should be plucked from his forlorn state of exile on the coast of Africa, and at length appointed minister of the parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world,—that he should there not only testify of such grace, but stand up as a singular instance and monument of it,—is a fact which I can contemplate with admiration, but can never sufficiently estimate."

Having no children, he had adopted a niece, Eliza Cunningham. But it pleased God early to remove her by consumption. She died in the fifteenth year of her age. But a greater loss was to follow. Three years after the death of her niece, Mrs. Newton found cancer showing itself on her breast, and in December 1790 it proved fatal.

Amid all his trials, the constant habit of realizing his heavenly Father's care and guidance was a prominent feature in Mr. Newton's character.

He remarks in one place that "The way of man is not in himself," nor can he conceive what belongs to a single step. A man made a smoke on the shore at the time a ship passed, which was thereby brought to, and restored me to England." Once, on the coast of Africa, a sudden and unaccountable fancy led his captain to call him back when just starting for the shore, and to send another man in his room. The boat sank, and his substitute was drowned. At Liverpool he was strangely hindered one morning, when going on board a ship. Had he been punctual, he would have reached her only a few minutes before she blew up.

At the time of Mrs. Newton's death, a letter came to him from a casual hearer, who had been stricken by an arrow from the unseen hand, and who cried to him, "Oh, sir, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" This awakened prodigal was Claudius Buchanan, afterwards the eminent preacher and promoter of Christian missions in the East. A few words from John Newton, blessed by the Holy Spirit, had brought young Buchanan to the Saviour's feet; and twenty years after this a few words from Claudius Buchanan's pen aroused Adoniram Judson, and sent him forth to be the apostle of Burmah.

Mr. Newton now approached his eightieth year, and memory and physical powers began to fail. A friend suggested that he should give up preaching. "I cannot stop," he replied. "What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?"

He declined day by day, till, in

December 1807, life seemed rather to cease than to be suddenly extinguished.

After such a history in his earlier days, no one will wonder that the key-note of John Newton's after experience was a life-long, adoring remembrance of the sovereignty, yet the glorious freeness, of that grace which, as M'Cheyne said of him, "changed the African blasphemer into the sweet singer of Olney." The thankful, loving old man never wearied of commending to others that "blood of Jesus Christ" which he knew, by such blessed experience, "cleanseth from all sin." In the wise, mellow sweetness of his daily life, in his "speech, always with grace, seasoned with salt," his path shone more and more unto the perfect day. He watched for opportunities of good-doing to all around him. "I see in the world," he once said, "two heaps, one of happiness, and the other of misery. If a child have dropt a half penny, and if by giving it another I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something to lessen the heap of sorrow. I would gladly do a greater thing, but let me not neglect to do this."

Reader! has *your* heart ever learned to sing as John Newton sang,—

"Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound!)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!"

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS.

"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."—ACTS ix. 5.



HERE is a parable wrapped up in a few words—the parable of the ox that was wilful, and being stricken with the ox-goad kicked against it, and drove the ox-goad still deeper into its flesh. It is plain, direct, appropriate, simple, and self-explaining, like the other parables of our Lord. I recognise in the speaker, who addressed Saul of Tarsus, the Man to whom the common people listened gladly.

Observe *the tenderness of the rebuke*. It is not, "O Saul, it is wicked, ungenerous, and mischievous of thee to resist me." It is not, "It is

hard for *me*," but "It is hard for *thee*;" as if the thoughts of the Saviour were so set upon his poor, erring, but ignorant child, that he felt, "As to what thou doest to my cause, I will say nothing; but see what thou art doing to thyself. It is hard for *thee*."

We have here five things—an ox, an ox-goad, kicks against it, painful results, and a wise counsel.

I. We have in the parable of the text AN OX. That ox is here employed as the picture of persecuting Saul, and of all who are like him. Alas, how low is man fallen that he can fitly be *compared to a brute beast*! "Oh," saith the proud heart, "doth God compare me to a beast?" Ah, my friend, and it is the beast which hath cause to complain rather than you. The beast bows its neck to man, whom God appoints to be its ruler; it lives and it dies, and both in life and death it answers the end for which God sent it into the world; but as for you, you wantonly run against God, and when you know his will, you do the contrary; and though he has addressed you with words of love and tenderness, yet you will not hear, but reject what he saith, and go on in your rebellious ways.

An ox is *a creature of which service is rightly demanded*. As every man who keepeth an ox expecteth it to serve him, so also does God expect of those creatures whose wants he supplieth, that they should do his bidding. Wouldst thou keep even a dog if it did not follow at thy heel? If the cur snapped at thee, as thou dost, O sinner, against thy Maker, thou wouldst soon have done with feeding him. Take heed lest God have done with feeding thee, for if he getteth not service out of thee, he will not for ever spare thee.

The ox was also selected as a picture of Saul because of *its perverseness*. The bullock is not easily

made accustomed to the yoke. It is not easy to train an ox to do one's bidding. Hence a very rough and cruel instrument was used by the Eastern husbandman—a long stick with a sharp prong at the end, which he drove into the stubborn ox to compel it to move. Ah, how perverse are our wills! They are more stubborn surely than the ox. We will not go in the right way; we choose the wrong naturally. There are some who are suffering at this very day for their sins. The sins of their youth are in their bones, and yet they stagger to their lusts again. Parents sometimes complain that they cannot teach their children, they are so wilful. Ah! if they were as wilful as we are towards God, we should have cause enough to complain.

II. THE OX-GOAD. No doubt it is a cruel instrument, but it is one which was thought by the Oriental husbandman to be needful. Our God has many ways of goading us, but he does not use the goad with us where gentler means will avail. God does not come to blows with men till he has first tried words with them. It is a word and a blow with man; but there is often a long space between the word and the blow with God. It is, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" before he comes with the executioner's axe. But when words are of no avail, then the Lord in tender mercy, if he means to save the soul, adopts sharper means, and comes from words to blows and wounds. Some of you know how God will wound us, when he means to save us.

Some of us felt the ox-goad when we were children. Under the government of our parents and friends we were often restive. We wanted to do after our own devices, but our parents loved us, and they would not permit it. Oh, how the young heart can rebel! I speak experimentally when I say I believe a young child

heart is capable of as thorough and deep-seated rebellion against God and right, as the heart of the oldest man. You do not like to be talked to about religion—some of you. You have half a mind to shift your lodgings to get away from godly people who pester you. You would fain get another situation, for you work at a bench close by the side of a Christian man, and he makes sinning uncomfortable to you; he speaks to you very tenderly and plainly, and you jest at him, and put it off, but still he does make it an uneasy thing for you to be what you are. Oh, how grateful you ought to be for this! and yet I should not wonder but what you are kicking at it. These are all goads which God uses, with a view to your good.

Every doctrine, and every part of the teachings of God's word, acts like a goad to unconverted men. Many of you know, before you were converted, that anger was just your first state of feeling when you heard the gospel. I feel rather glad when I hear that I have made some people angry. Angry feeling is better than no feeling, and enmity to the truth may be looked upon with more hope than indifference to it.

At times the Lord will goad us in another way, namely, by *personal afflictions*: perhaps he sends a sickness, and lays the strong man moaning upon his bed. Possibly it is a failure in business, a loss of property, a disappointment in marriage, or the death of friends, or a gradual decay of the constitution, or the loss of a limb or an eye. Loud voices these, if men had ears to hear. Oh, while there is a remedy, may God apply it to you, poor guilty souls!

The goad is used yet further. When God has goaded a man with afflictions, and pains, and all the doctrines of the gospel, sometimes he stirs him with the common operations of the Holy Ghost in his con-

science. Saul was being goaded at that very moment when Christ spoke, and said, "Why persecutest thou me?" Ah! and take care you do not resist these goadings. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." I believe that the Holy Ghost often, by what we call the common operations which he exercises upon the hearts of men, deals with men's consciences so far as to arouse and warn them. But they quench the Spirit.

III. In the third place—and here let conscience be awake—we have to speak about THE KICKS. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

The ox when wounded is so very foolish as to dash its feet against the goad, and consequently drives it deeper into himself, and hurts himself the more. This is the natural manner of men, till God makes something more than beasts of them. Man is sure, like the ox, to kick against the pricks. When we were but little, possibly we did not like religion; prayer was distasteful, the Sabbath was dull, and the house of God wearisome, and therefore we kicked against them. As some of you grew up, you took to sneering at those who kindly advised you. Many, the moment they get a word of counsel from any person, treat that person at once as an enemy, and vow that they will take no further notice of such a "cant," as they will call him. That is a common way of kicking against the pricks. Many sinners, when the word of God is too hot for them, take to cavilling at it. When a sermon comes home, what is the easiest way of getting rid of the impression? Why, begin disputing over it. A man who is reproved by a sermon will perhaps feel that, if it be true, he must give up his drunkenness. "But," says he, "I will *not* give up my

drunkenness; I do not want to do that, and therefore I do not believe that the sermon is true." Or another says, "If this is correct, I must shut up my shop on the Sunday, and so lose my Sunday's profits. I cannot afford to lose money, and therefore I will abuse the preacher." The guilty conscience cries, "I will pick a hole in the minister's coat, because he has found one in mine. If what he says be true, I must mend my ways; but I do not intend to do that, therefore I will try and find some fault with the truth which is taught, or with the man who teaches it." Is this *your* way of kicking against the pricks?

IV. THE RESULT OF KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS. Christ says, "It is hard for thee." Friend, let me hold you by the button-hole and talk to you. It has been very hard for your mother that you should have gone on as you have done. For her sake, think! With some of you it has been very hard for your families. Drunkenness clothes a man's children in rags as well as himself. It has been hard in some cases with even your neighbours and your employers; they had a deal to put up with: but that is not the matter of consideration just now; it is hard for *you*. Oh, young man, you know that sin does not make you happy. Do you know what will very likely be your history if you run into sin and persist in it? You are kicking against the pricks, and making the wounds received ten times worse, so long as you keep on kicking. It is hard for you, young man, to be such a sinner as you are, but how hard it will be! By and by

the goad will become a sword; the very gospel which warns will be the gospel that smites. "God shall judge the world"—how?—"according to my gospel," says the apostle Paul. It is according to the gospel that you shall be judged at the last, if you reject it and perish in your sins. This comes of kicking against the pricks.

V. The last thing is the GOOD COUNSEL. It is just this: since it is hard for you to kick against the pricks, and there is nothing to be got by it, cease, oh cease from your evil way! O sensible, thoughtful man, kick against the pricks no more.

Let me say to thee, sinner, *yield thy heart to the goadings of divine love*, for "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Oh, think not that the Saviour's blood will be unable to cleanse thee! Not thy worthiness, but thine unworthiness, attracts his attention; not thy strength, but thy weakness; not thy riches, but thy poverty. He came to save just such as thou art. Lost one, but loved one, trust in him! Cast thyself now upon him, having nothing of thine own. Come and rest in him. He will not cast thee away. He has never cast any soul away, however filthy its previous life may have been, and he will not begin to-day to reject sinners. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Wherefore do ye kick against the pricks? Trust Jesus with your whole heart. Trust in Jesus, and your sins, which are many, are forgiven you.

REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

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“DO YE NOT REMEMBER?”



See page 2.

THERE are truths and facts lying in our memory, which may at any time be brought up either to accuse us or to help us. The “*Son, remember!*” spoken to the rich man in hell, (Luke xvi. 25,) shut his mouth from making any attempt at excuse; and if you, reader, be found beside him hereafter, what will not these words suggest to you? Oh the memory of

Sabbaths, and of gospel calls, and of awakening providences, and of deep impressions, that brought you to the very threshold of the kingdom!

On the other hand, the “*Do ye not remember?*” spoken by Christ, (Mark viii. 18,) to his disciples, brought back to their mind a delightful scene, namely, the five thousand people on the hill, fed by

the Lord with the five loaves and two fishes, and every one satisfied, every one adoring.

And so it was also with the wondering and perplexed women at Christ's sepulchre: two angels, (Luke xxiv. 6,) reminded them of their Master's words in Galilee, which had lain in their memory forgotten till that day. All of us have sometimes noticed how things past, and words spoken years ago, may suddenly be brought up before us. It is at such times, as if one took hold of the end of a chain, and drew it up link by link, in a moment there rises up a whole series of events: persons, and scenes, and words, are all vividly before us as they were perhaps thirty years ago. Once, in the congregation of the minister who writes this tract, a godly woman was listening most earnestly to the preaching of a stranger under whose ministry she had sat twenty years before. "What a wonderful evening," said she, "has this been to me; not altogether for what I have heard, but because it has opened a grave of memory!"

There is no doubt that, from time to time, the Holy Spirit, (see John xiv. 26,) blesses souls by bringing up truth, spoken long before, to the memory of those who at the moment seemed to let all slip. Reader, it is no small matter to be a *hearer of the word*, if it be "the word of the truth of the gospel," the good news about the Great Sacrifice for sin to which all sinners are called. It may be that, many days after, you shall bless the Lord that ever you went to that church, or to that Sabbath school, or that hall, or that open-air meeting, where, not an angel as at Bethlehem,—for an angel could not tell of sin and the Saviour from personal experience,—but a fellow-man set forth the way of salvation, and showed you a sinner drawn from the miry clay and fearful pit, and set upon the Rock, singing the new song.

In the battles between the North and South in America, that brought slavery to an end, a soldier was brought in wounded in the fight at Pittsburg Landing. He lay uncared for on the mud floor in a tent held by the South. It was Sabbath night; the rain poured down, and soon the battle was renewed. Amid the roar of artillery and the flood of rain, there came back to his memory very vividly a text and a sermon he had heard twenty years before. His conscience was awakened as he recalled that past occasion; the seed of the word, dropped twenty years ago into his memory, sprang up as he lay there. Some of the delegates of the Christian Commission found him in this state; he told them all; and these friends relate how that remembered text and sermon were used by the Holy Spirit for the soldier's true conversion.

About thirty years ago Dr. Kalley was in Syria, passing a summer in Mount Lebanon, at a village 2000 feet above the sea. He used to employ his medical skill in helping the sick natives, supplying medicine and giving advice. A young man took him to his mother, for whose relief Dr. Kalley more than once carried through a difficult operation. The young man carefully observed it, but said little. This was about 1852. Dr. Kalley left the country; but last year a letter reached him from one of the children of this youth. The letter told how his father remembered Dr. Kalley's kindness, and his words. "Your speaking to me was always from the gospel; while I stood listening to your words, not because I believed, but because I wished you to attend to my mother." The letter goes on to tell that he had raised himself, and had been eight years a priest in the Greek Church; but "*your sermons began to grow in my heart*,"—so that he gave up his priesthood, and com-

menaced meetings in his own house for the pure worship of God. He has now been a Protestant teacher for ten years. During three years he taught the word of life at old "Ramoth-Gilead," beyond Jordan. During other three years, his work was in and around Nazareth. He has now gone home to his native village, where he ministers to a congregation of forty. "Your words," (he writes to Dr. Kalley,) "*which you put in my heart, were buried many years; then they grew, and became by the grace of God a large tree, which feeds, and will feed with its fruit, which the power of God gives me.*" "You must know that when I heard you were still alive, my joy was as Joseph's joy when he heard that his father was alive;—but oh! for when shall I bring the carriages to send for you!"

But no case of the kind is more notable than that which has been often told about Luke Short, nearly two hundred years ago. He was a steady lad, who attended on ordinances. One Sabbath afternoon the well-known John Flavel, then minister of Dartmouth in Devonshire, was preaching on the text, 1 Cor. xvi. 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha.*" That afternoon John Flavel was more than usually earnest and solemn, yearning for the salvation of the unconverted. With intense feeling he pressed home the words of the text on his hearers, many of whom could not forget how he spoke. "Alas! alas! some of you, after all, will not love him. I must change my note. I must deliver a message to you that I am loath to deliver, but my Lord and Master requires it of me, in order that I may deliver the whole counsel of God: 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha.*' A strange curse, in a strange tongue! 'Let him

be accursed of God till the Lord shall come to judge him.' If any one, whether male or female, high or low, rich or poor, old or young, love not the Lord Jesus Christ above everything in the world, let them, (says the word and majesty of God,) be *Anathema Maran-atha*—accursed of God! the curse of God resting till the Lord come and execute the fulness of his wrath upon them." As the man of God was speaking, the whole assembly was not only solemnized, but struck into a sort of consternation, some being affected on their own account, and some at the thought of their children and friends. One gentleman sank back in his seat, like one dead, in awful distress of soul. Many sobbed and wept. But there were some who were able to pass that solemn day unmoved, though surprised and awed for the time. One of these was Luke Short, whose name we have already mentioned, and who was at that time a youth of about fifteen years of age. He felt it, but went home and forgot it all.

A few years after, he emigrated to America, settling down at Marblehead, and then moving on to Middleborough, in Massachusetts. He got well on in business; and as years passed you would have found him busy with his farm, and content with this world. He enjoyed uncommon health, and his life was protracted to an unusual length. He not only outlived the threescore and ten, but he reached his hundredth year, his mind retaining nearly all its former vigour, while he was able still to do some little work on his farm. "But," (says the old narrative,) "he was still careless of his soul, and was really a '*sinner an hundred years old, ready to be accursed.*'" (Isa. lxx. 20.)

One day, sitting in the field, he began to muse on the past. His thoughts went back, far back to the days of his youth, when he was in

England. The course of meditation bore him back to Dartmouth, to the days when John Flavel was his minister. And then—no doubt it was the working of the Spirit of the Lord—he began to recall the Sabbath of that time. His memory distinctly brought up that remarkable afternoon when Flavel's sermon so affected the audience. Much of it he could still remember; and the affectionate earnestness of the preacher, as well as the deep and solemn impression on the congregation, all rose up fresh before him. What an hour that was to him! the Spirit of God working in his soul on the spot. He felt that *he* had not, all those hundred years, loved the Lord Jesus Christ; he felt that assuredly he was exposed to the stroke of that dreadful *anathema maran-atha*. He went to his house "convinced of sin;" and soon after was "convinced of righteousness." (John xvi. 9, 10.) He found "peace through the blood of the cross," and was now to be seen walking in the paths of righteousness. He lived for several years after this, spared to be a witness for God his Saviour. As a member of the Congregational church in the town of Middleborough, it is testified by those who knew him that his life was quiet and consistent. He "fell asleep" in his 110th year.

Was not that man a trophy of long-suffering grace? Oh, reader, see what witnesses for God can be summoned to give evidence at the judgment-seat! The seed of the word sown in that man's heart was there still, after eighty-four years had elapsed. Do

you not see two things?—first, the unspeakable importance of being within hearing of the gospel;—"Faith cometh by hearing," (Rom. x. 17;) and next, the terrible danger of hearing without being converted? Do you not see how the truth that lies in your mind and memory may one day rise up? and how that a host of witnesses to your inexcusable unbelief may stare you in the face on the great day? Every call of Christ to you, every tender invitation and appeal, every providence, every solemn scene, every remembered truth, will bear testimony that if you are lost, God is not to blame.

"Do ye not remember" how often the Lord Jesus stood and cried in your ears, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*"? "Do you not remember" to-day times and seasons when you got a glimpse of his grace and love, something like the look that melted Peter's heart? Will you not now tell him—

"Lord, thou hast won! at length I yield;
My heart, by mighty grace compelled,
Surrenders all to thee!"

Do you not remember how you saw the open gate, and Christ on the threshold, waiting to be gracious? Do you not remember how you were almost persuaded, and how you wished you had been persuaded *altogether*? And why should not **THIS DAY** be a time to be remembered as the day of your welcome into the family of God?

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1884.

"OH, WHAT NEWS!"



See page 4.

I HAD already passed the village of St. Branchier, near Martigny, in Switzerland, and was about to descend the paved road which leads to the little bridge, when I saw, some little distance before me, an old woman seated. She made an effort to rise and meet me. I went up to her. "Give me something," said she. Alas! these words are commonly the

only resource of unhappy man, to man his fellow. Such is poverty!

"Do not rise, poor woman," said I; "I will seat myself beside you. I see you are unhappy." "Very unhappy," said she, wiping away her tears with the corner of her garment. "I do not know what will become of me." And, indeed, all the marks of misery were united in the person of

this poor woman. Her tall figure was scantily wrapped in a threadbare cloak, her feet were bare, and one of them was wounded. Her thin face, her dim and hollow eyes, told of long-continued suffering. A little tattered bag, containing some fruit and bread, lay beside her.

"Have you no family?" said I; "are you desolate and friendless?" "My last son died twenty years ago. I lived with my grandson near the village of Morgne; but since the day when the mountain torrent swept away our little village, he has never been seen. He must have been carried away with his house. His wife and children live together, three leagues off, on the mountain. They are not able to support me too. However, I shall need but little, and for only a little while longer."

"A little while," I repeated; the approaching death of the poor woman—her departure for eternity—presented itself to my mind.

"Then you do not expect to remain much longer here below?" "No, no," said she, looking at me, "the days of my journey are nearly ended. I have completed my ninety-fifth year; I know that soon, very soon, I must appear in the presence of God." She groaned as she uttered these words.

"Well, poor woman, your soul is no doubt prepared to meet the Lord?" "No, sir, no; I believe it is not. And this is what troubles me."

"Then you are seeking salvation—you wish to escape from the wrath to come?" "Yes, I am seeking salvation," cried she, covering her face with her hands; "yes, I wish to go to heaven, but I do not know the way."

"Have you long thought of this?" "It will be two years the next festival since I was with the cows on the mountain; a traveller arrived in the evening at our cottage, and passed

the night. He spoke of God, and of heaven, as if he had come from thence. He had a book, out of which he read many wonderful things about sinners, and Jesus the Saviour. He often addressed himself to me. I even heard him in the night praying for us, and for 'the poor woman,' said he, 'who must soon appear before God.' At his departure towards day-break, he took me by the hand, (I seem still to hear his voice,) and said to me, 'Poor woman, you will soon die. I shall not see you again in this world: remember the Saviour; seek him while he is to be found.' From that day I have had no peace; what that man said to me is *here*, upon my heart. I feel I am a sinner. I have tried in every way to cheer myself, but I am still under condemnation."

"What has your life been?" "Ah! my life has not been worse than that of others, but God is holy; he is holy, and he looks at the heart. No, I cannot enter heaven as I am, and I know not what to do!"

"Blessed are they that mourn," said the Saviour, "for they shall be comforted." This sweet promise of the Friend of sinners presented itself to my mind.

I seemed to hear the Saviour addressing it to her himself, and drawing already this sheep without a shepherd to his fold. I said to her with seriousness, and fixing my eyes upon her, "I know what you must do, and how you can be delivered from your sins, and certainly enter the paradise of God."

Holding out to me her withered and trembling hands, she cried, "Have pity upon me—have pity upon my grey hairs, for I must soon go down to the grave."

"Not before you know that you are saved," said I, taking one of her hands. "No, my friend, I believe that you will not leave this world

before Jesus calls you ; before he has given you his peace. Listen to me. Did not that stranger tell you that Jesus the Son of God was given to be our Saviour?" "Yes, he said much about him which I have forgotten. I only remember that he told us that there was no other Saviour than the Son of God, and that if the sinner is not saved by Christ, there is no hope for him."

"Well, dear friend, do you believe this to be true? or do you think that man can redeem himself, and by his good works blot out his sins?" "Ah! I have given up that hope; I thought so once. Before I heard that stranger, I thought I should be holy enough to be received by God, and that my good would outweigh my faults. Now, I only see that I am a great sinner, and that I cannot take away my sins, or make up for the evil I have done."

"Are you sure of this? Have you tried to deliver yourself?" "I believe I have done all that man can do. From the moment my eyes were opened to see my state as a sinner, and that I was cursed by the will of God, I was terrified, and I thought seriously of living better; from that day I have given up everything; I have forsaken all I loved in the world. I have lived in penitence and in the greatest privations; I have given to the church and to the poor all I possessed, even my clothes; I have made pilgrimages, and repeated prayers. All is useless. They assure me that my salvation is certain; they even call me a saint; but I have here, upon my heart, upon my conscience, a weight which presses me down—a continual fear. Ah! if you could take it away!"

"Jesus," I answered, "is able to deliver you; it was for this he came into the world; it was to comfort those that mourn—those who are weary and heavy laden; if you go to him, he will give rest to your soul."

"Alas! would he receive me in the state I am? If you knew how many times I would have gone to this Saviour, if my unworthiness had not hindered me. Yesterday I again remembered what that stranger said about the prodigal son, and I could not help crying while thinking of his happiness. Ah! said I, and I say so again, how happy he must have been in the arms of his father."

"And do you believe, my friend, that those arms would be less open to you than they were to that wandering son?" "Me? Ah! I am not worthy to cast myself into them."

"And was *he*? Did he trouble himself in thinking about worthiness, when he saw he was *pardoned*?"

The poor woman looked at me as if seeking to comprehend my meaning, but she did not understand me. It is difficult for the heart of man to believe that he can be *loved of God*. Speak to the vilest sinner of atoning for his sins *himself*—he listens; and if he is alarmed, a life of austerities—of sacrifices of all kinds—does not dishearten him; but announce to him his *free* pardon; tell this guilty one, who feels that he is condemned, that his God is become his *Saviour*, and *forgives* his sins, and *gives* him life,—and the man does not believe it—he will not have it. He rejects it because his proud heart would rather merit *reward* than receive *grace*. This was the mistake of this aged peasant. Taught to believe that the salvation of man is the work of man, she had lived in this fearful error, and had not even an idea that it could be otherwise. I perceived the darkness of her understanding, and said to her, "You have not then understood why the Saviour came into the world?" "To save sinners," said she.

"But you do not know how he did this. You do not know how he put himself in the place of those he redeemed; that he received upon himself the dreadful curse of sin from

which he has redeemed our souls." "Happy, blessed are the redeemed!" cried she.

"Yes, blessed, and you will prove it, I hope. If you believe in Jesus, you also will have a part in his love and his grace.

"Why was he smitten by God, if not for poor sinners such as you and me? Alas! who more than you, more than I, had need that a Saviour should come and put himself between our souls and the eternal justice of the Most High? And since it is written that Jesus 'came to seek and to save that which was lost,'—that he died for the chief of sinners,—was it not for *me*—was it not for *you*, poor sinner, lost but for him, that he came—that he was crucified, accursed? Was it not for you that he cried on the cross, 'It is finished'? Why should you not believe it?"

Oh, gospel of Christ! word of peace and of life! who can know or tell of all thy power! The hour of awaking was come; her eyes were opening; her heart, for the first time, perceived the love of Jesus. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, was going to teach her that she might call God her Father, and believe herself to be loved by Him whom she had always dreaded as her Judge.

"Then may I believe that Jesus has died to save me?" said she to me, hesitating, as if she feared to affirm it.

"Would you doubt it? and would you separate yourself from the sacrifice of the Redeemer?"

"No, no, it is too blessed for me to refuse to believe it! Oh, why did I never hear it before?"

She was silent for some moments; her soul was contemplating this wondrous truth; she seemed at once astonished and overcome. At last, joining her hands and weeping abundantly, she looked at me and said, "Then Jesus has saved me!—has redeemed me, and I did not know it! Oh, what news! My heart is comforted! I feel already like another person.

"My God," she cried, lifting up her eyes to heaven, "then thou hast had pity upon an aged sinner; thou wouldst not let me die before I knew thee as my Saviour. Oh, what love! what love! This is what that stranger said, I remember—that I must be born again. Surely this is true of *me*! I belong to God. Come," said she, rising and taking her stick, "I must go; I must go at once and carry this good news to my grand-daughter and her children. My poor Abel! if he had known this before he died!"

"My mother," said I, "go in the name of Jesus, and tell your grandchildren, and every one, what this Saviour has done for your soul."

Reader, is *thy* soul at rest? Look no longer to thyself—to thy doings, or thy sufferings—for obtaining pardon. This poor old Swiss woman believed in Jesus, and was delivered from all her fears. Believe, even as simply as she did, and Jesus will give to thee also, righteousness and peace. And may thy life, like the little that was left of hers, be a life of faith upon the Son of God, "who loved me, and gave himself for me."

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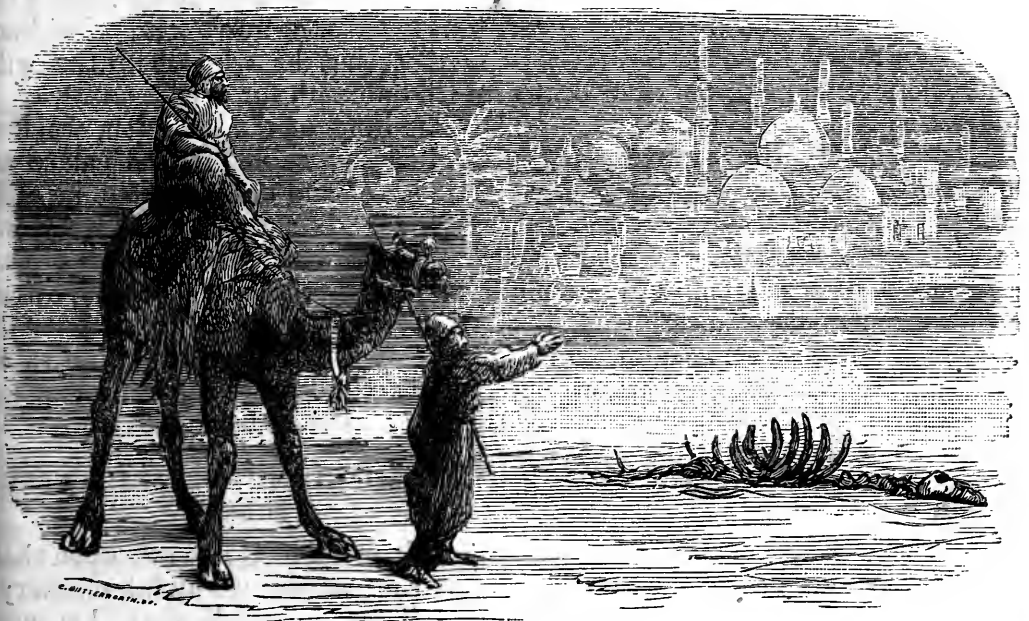
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1885.

"NO CONTINUING CITY."

"Here we have no continuing city."—HEBREWS XII. 14.



THE traveller in the Arabian desert often sees a wonderful sight. A fair landscape, or a noble castle, or a great city, seems suddenly to rise out of the sand before his eyes, and then, having lasted for half an hour, to pass utterly away. The mists exhaling from the heated sand had produced this vision. It is a splendid delusion; and only those who have seen it can believe

how real as well as how beautiful it appears. Yet while he is still gazing and admiring, the exquisite scene is gone.

So "the world passeth away and the lust thereof." Its beauty fades, its glory departs; leaving the poor soul that trusted in it without a home and without a hope. Earth's goodly cities, palaces, temples, gardens,—all swept

off its face, disappearing like a vision of the night, and nothing left but the desolation of despair, the eternal wilderness. Yet men will dream over again the same shadowy dreams, unwarned by the failures and disappointments of others, or their own. They will not believe that "here they have no continuing city," nor will they seek one to come! They hope to be more fortunate than their forefathers, and count upon success for themselves when all others have failed. Vain hope! "The hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; he awaketh, and his soul is empty: the thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; he awaketh, and his soul is thirsty!" NO CONTINUING CITY! These are the words which the Spirit of God has written upon the gates and walls of every earthly city, and upon the doors of every human home. Each closing year takes up the message and sounds it more loudly abroad, as time draws nearer to its close.

Napoleon I., in company with some officers, was visiting the picture gallery of the Louvre in Paris. Pointing to a remarkable picture, he expressed his admiration of it to one of his generals. "Yes," said the general, "it is immortal." "Immortal!" said Napoleon; "how long will it last?" "Three or four hundred years," was the reply. Then, pointing to a splendid statue, he asked, "How long will that last?" "Three or four thousand years." "You call that immortality!" said the Emperor. Three or four thousand years! man's ideas of the "immortal" are narrow enough. Even Napoleon could smile at them; though he might not comprehend the awful magnificence of the words, "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." The vicissitudes of his own strange history had perhaps taught him that "here we have no continuing city."

The annals of earth have taught us

that its cities are not "continuing." One of its oldest cities is Jerusalem. Even *it* is a ruin; and, with its broken walls, displaced temple, worn-out battlements, buried palaces, says to us with solemn voice, "Here have we no continuing city." Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Carthage, have all passed from their grandeur into ruins or mounds of earth. "No continuing city" is written upon their hoary fragments. A ruined city is a solemn sight—a far more solemn sight than most sight-seers ever think of. All the past lives and deaths, the past joys and sorrows, the past hopes and fears, that its broken walls and gates could testify to,—these crowd in upon the thoughtful gazer, and confirm the word, "Here have we no continuing city." All they who dwelt in it are gone; and the place wherein they dwelt is also gone! "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he who doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The king of old Babylon, we are told, once "walked in the palace of Babylon;" and as he walked he said in pride, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30.) But while these vain-glorious words were yet in his mouth, there fell a voice from heaven,

"THE KINGDOM IS DEPARTED FROM THEE."

Thus it was that God wrote upon that city the words of awful mockery, to tell its monarch that his was no continuing city, and that his kingdom was not "the kingdom which cannot be moved."

And such is the tale that is told by the history of all the kings and kingdoms, the cities and palaces of earth. They pass away like a tale that is told. "The earth abideth for ever;" but the things which man has built upon it are swept off "like

the chaff of the summer threshing floor."

The old Jews, among their many traditions, tell us a story of Methuselah. They say that his great length of life was early made known to him. His friends counselled him to build a substantial house for himself. He refused, saying that it was not worth while building a house at all for such a *short time*. He realized its shortness, not its length; and he looked for "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He had seen cities rise in their strength and greatness, from the days of Cain, and he knew that they had not endured, and that there was judgment awaiting any that still survived. Long before Babylon or Nineveh had risen and fallen, he knew that "here we have no continuing city." His faith saw through the mists of human "glory," and he refused it all.

Is there, then, a city more enduring, in which we may find a home when all the grandeur of earth is laid in ruins? Is there a region into which the last enemy cannot enter, where nothing that we admire shall fade, and nothing that we love shall die?

There is. Though here there is no continuing city, there cometh one to us from heaven. It is the Holy City, into which nothing that defileth shall enter. (Rev. xxi. 27.) No death is there; no sickness, no pain, no weeping, no sin, no failure, no disappointed hopes; no vexing cares, no wasting fears! "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, and the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

But how shall I find my way to it? A voice from heaven says, "I am the Way;" and another voice says, "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

But how shall I pass in through the gates? The same voice pro-

claims an ever open gate, and says, moreover, "I am the Door;" "Come unto me;" "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

But how am I to get this boldness, so that I shall go in without trembling? By fixing my eyes on "the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is the blood that removes all dread and doubt. It is the blood that has purchased both the city and the right of entrance. He who accepts God's testimony to the blood of Christ becomes an heir of that city, and receives full liberty to enter in. Strange that such a city should be purchased for us by blood, and that our liberty to go in to possess it should turn upon our acceptance of the divine message concerning that blood. Yet so it is. There is no passport but this. Without this we try in vain to take possession. Prayers and tears, merit and money, are all in vain. But with the blood, nothing is easier, and simpler, than the admission "through the gates into the city."

If you say, Surely it must be purchased? God says, "Here is the purchase-money,—the blood of my only-begotten Son." This is the payment,—the only payment that can be acknowledged in heaven. Accept God's purchase-money, and all is yours. From the moment you believe, *you are counted as if you had paid the whole price yourself*. You take this money in your hand, and go to God to obtain from him the heavenly city. Thus it is that we are said both to buy it, and to have it "without money and without price." In reference to this heavenly glory, the question is asked in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, "How are we to be sharers thereof?" And the answer given is that "the Lord, the Governor of that country, hath recorded that in his book, the substance of which is, that *if we be truly willing to*

have it, he will bestow it upon us freely."

The "continuing city," the "city which hath foundations," is the free gift of God. All that is needed in the way of payment has been made; and our acceptance of that payment makes us citizens of that city. They who are to inhabit it are they who "have believed the record which God has given of his Son." They have no other title to it but this, and their acceptance of this title is the beginning of a holy life.

It is only now that this city can be secured. Our short life here is given us for this end; and it will soon be done.

"My candle is almost burnt out, and I haven't another," said a poor woman mournfully, as she looked round her room and saw how much work was yet to be done that night. Life is hastening to its close with all of us; and much work remains undone. The youngest have not long to live; and the aged are on the brink of the grave. Our candles are burning out. Can we have others when they are done? Or shall we be left in the dark for ever? The darkness of a few years would be sad enough; but the eternal darkness, how terrible! Is, then, the end of life's brief candle to be the everlasting night, or is it to be the rising of the unsetting sun? Our candle cannot burn for ever; and it is of unspeakable importance that we know, ere it be too late, whether its extinction is to be succeeded by night or day.

Why not make sure, O man, of

your eternal future? It is a matter of infinite moment that your eternal morrow should be one of sunshine, and not of gloom. The eternal sunshine, how blessed! The eternal gloom, how terrible!

One year more is gone! A large portion of our life, but a small portion of eternity! How much lies buried in its twelve brief months! Yet all that is buried there shall rise again. Nothing is eternally buried but what is buried in the grave of Christ. Sins, sorrows, fears, troubles, are now buried out of sight. But the day of resurrection is coming for all these; and we shall have to face them once more, unless we have cast them into the tomb of Him who died for us and who rose again. Nothing of evil that has been hidden there shall ever rise again. But where there has been no real burial, all the long sad past of the sinner shall rise again, and that resurrection shall bring with it "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

An old minister once closed his sermon with these words, "Bury your sins in the grave of Christ." And an old Welsh minister of a former generation once began a sermon thus:—Leaning over the pulpit, he said, with earnest voice, "I am going to ask you one question, a question which I cannot answer, which you cannot answer, which devils cannot answer, which no angel can answer, which God himself cannot answer, **HOW SHALL YOU ESCAPE, IF YOU NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?**"

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1885.

MARY JONES AND THE WELSH BIBLE.



See p. 3.

A MISSIONARY traveller in Iceland, in the year 1815, gave inexpressible joy to a pastor by the gift of a Bible in his own tongue. He had in vain sought for seventeen years to get this treasure. Do we thus prize the Word of God? Strangers remark in our congregations in Scotland, that everybody at church seems to have a Bible, and a Bible of his or her own.

Happy are we in this respect, above other countries. We are favoured far more than was Israel in the days of Solomon, when "the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones in abundance." But at the same time, has it not too much come to this, that, as "silver was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon," so the Bible in these days

among us? We had not always this high privilege. In the sixteenth century, one copy of the Bible in English, a copy of Wickliffe's translation, was brought to Scotland, and kept from the view of enemies in a receptacle made for it in the wall of the old mansion of Earliston in Kirkcudbrightshire. And then an ambassador brought from the South a New Testament, and often gathered his followers together in a quiet spot near Loch Ken, to hear the words of life. "The Word of God was precious in those days."

It was very much the same in Wales down to the middle of last century: a Bible in the Welsh tongue was possessed by very few. And yet the desire to read the gospel in their own language was very strong, especially after the Spirit had begun to awaken the people of Wales. It was then that the following incident occurred.

We have said that a copy of the Welsh Bible was scarcely to be found in any cottage; but at that time circulating schools had created in some of the youthful scholars a great desire to possess as their own that Bible, portions of which they read and learned by heart. It was in 1800 that one of these, Mary Jones, heard that at a farm-house two miles off from her own village, Tyn-y-dall, there was a Bible, which the kind farmer and his wife made her welcome to come and read as often as she pleased. For six years, summer and winter, she used to journey to that house almost every week; and, more than this, she all the while was meditating in her mind how she might get a Bible of her own like this one. She laid aside for this object whatever pence she got. It was very little she got, and it took some years to gather the sum required.

But Mary had now made up the price; and, on inquiry, was told that at Bala, twenty-five miles off, Mr.

Charles, the minister, might be able to get her what she so desired. Accordingly she set out; walking all the way barefoot, carrying her boots in a wallet, ready to be put on when she should reach Bala. It was late in the evening when she reached the town; but she found out a Methodist preacher to whom she had been directed. There she spent the night, and very early next day, (for she was to return home before dark,) the preacher guided her to Mr. Charles' house, encouraging her as he went by saying, "He'll let you have a Bible if he can, for he's the kindest man I ever knew;" but adding, "The only fear I have is that he has sold every copy. But we'll try, we'll try."

Mr. Charles met them at the door, and their errand was soon told. Mr. Charles questioned Mary very kindly, and was greatly moved by her story; but he was sorely perplexed: "I am heartily sorry that the little maid has come all the way from her home to obtain a Bible, for I have no copy to give her! All the Bibles I got from London are sold, except one or two promised away to friends." This was more than the little maid could bear. Was the great prize which she had so long toiled for, and which she had thought within her grasp, to be lost after all? She wept bitterly. Mr. Charles was more than ever moved. Those tears—nothing could withstand them! At length he said, "My little maid, I see I am bound to let you have a copy, though at the sacrifice of my promise of it to another. But I must give it; I cannot say no." And he handed her the Bible, bidding her read it much, and treasure its truths in her memory and heart.

On her way home, how often did Mary take the precious Book out of her wallet to read it, and then replace it, with the feeling that she was now rich indeed!

As for Mr. Charles, as she was taking farewell, he said to the friend who brought her, "Is not this enough to melt the hardest heart? A poor intelligent young maid has had to walk fifty miles for a Bible, and could scarcely get it after all! The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge has decided to print no more Welsh Bibles, but this little maid has so moved me, that I cannot rest till the great need of our country be supplied in some other way."

And so, not long after, he went to London to tell everybody the great need of his country, all the more urgent because recent revival had awakened, in many more than Mary Jones, intense craving for the Word of God in their own tongue. He went about telling that simple story; and at one meeting proposed that at once a *Bible Society* should be formed for *Wales*. All present seemed to agree heartily; but the Rev. Joseph Hughes rose and said, "Mr. Charles, if a Bible Society for Wales, why not for the whole country?—why not for the whole world?" And this was the origin of the Bible Society.

But we have something more to tell about Mary Jones. In due time she was married to a godly man, Thomas Lewis; and in her new home read her Bible most diligently, till all her neighbours learned to regard her as an authority on all Scriptural subjects. But there, also, Mary felt she ought to do all she could to help the circulation of the Welsh Scriptures. Her husband was only a weaver, so that she had very little money to spare. However, she was very fond of bees, and very successful in managing them. She became noted for the number of her bee-hives, and the superior quality of her honey and bees-wax; and as for the bees themselves, they were on the best terms with her. When she came near the hives they would come out as if to salute her, play round

her head, and alight in scores on her face and arms, without ever once giving a sting. When she closed her hand on a cluster of bees, they would run out and in between her fingers, as if they were in a hive. Well, whatever money was earned in this way, a large portion was set aside for the Bible Society; and year after year Mary Jones' "Missionary Bees" yielded a good return. When, in 1854, there was a collection made in the chapel toward the *China Million Testament Fund*, Mary was found to have put half-a-sovereign into the plate. Nothing gave her more joy than a successful season that enabled her to give a good sum, in part to the Bible Society, and in part to the Foreign Missions.

Mary lived to the age of eighty. She died in 1864, full of faith and hope. But it was Mary as "the little maid" that was so remarkably used—Mary who, from ten to sixteen, laid by all the pence that now and then came into her possession, in order to be able in the end to have a Bible of her own. It was with her even as with the little maid in 2 Kings v., used of God at that early age to draw the attention of kings and kingdoms to what the God of Israel could do. And Mary Jones never forgot that Bible which she got in Bala. After she had a house of her own, that Bible which had such a history, and which led to such blessed results, used to lie on a little table that stood by her bedside; and there it was when she died, in 1864. In her own handwriting on a blank page these words are written, (the book is now in the possession of the British and Foreign Bible Society :) "*Mary Jones was born 16th December 1784. I bought this in the 16th year of my age. I am daughter of Jacob Jones and Mary Jones his wife. May the Lord give me grace. Amen. Mary*

Jones is the true owner of this Bible, bought in the year 1800."

This "little maid," who lived to more than the age of eighty, sleeps in Jesus in the graveyard of Brynecrug, in Wales. It is surrounded with a railing, and at one end is a large monumental stone, on the top of which an open Bible is engraved; and round it the words, "*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever,*" in Welsh and English. And beneath are these words:—

MARY, widow of THOMAS LEWIS,
Weaver, Brynecrug,

Who died 28th December 1864, aged 82.
This Tombstone was erected by Contributions
of the Calvinistic Methodists in the
District, and other Friends,

In respect to her memory as the Welsh girl
who walked from Abergynolwyn to Bala

In 1830, when 16 years of age,
To procure a Bible from Rev. Thomas Charles,
(a circumstance which led to the
establishment of
The British and Foreign Bible Society.)

See, Reader, what one true act of faith and love may produce—one such act done by the most simple and illiterate. God could make the circle in the water formed by that stone dropped in by that little hand, widen and widen, till all the world feels the effect!

And what a Book is *God's Word*! It is to us what the Voice from the Holy Oracle, the Holy of Holies, was to Israel in ancient days. Do you reverently read that Word that has made so many souls rejoice in time and eternity? Do you daily go apart and sit alone that you may hear the voice from heaven that

speaks in this sacred volume? It is here that the voice of God the Saviour, the voice of Father, Son, and Spirit, cries to the sons of men, "*Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.*" (Isa. liv. 1.) It is here the gracious call is given, "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" (Matt. xi. 28.) It is here the voice proclaims, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" (1 Tim. i. 15.) "*In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*" (Eph. i. 7.) "*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*" (Isa. i. 16.) "*Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you.*" (Prov. i. 23.) "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" (John iii. 16.)

This Book of God is like a lighthouse built to send out light in the dark, and save vessels from shipwreck. Once, on a foreign shore, a lighthouse of this kind was suddenly darkened; yet there was no want of oil in the lamp. Why then? It was found that swarms of little insects had settled on the glass, and coated it over. And so it is that oftentimes the swarms of earthly things, cares or joys, hinder the entrance of the divine light. "*But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.*"

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APRIL 1885.

ABOUT SIN.



A RIGHT knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving religion. The first thing that God does when he makes man a new creature in Christ, is to send light into his heart, and show him that he is a guilty sinner. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul's disease, you can-

not wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies. I believe that one of the chief wants of the church in the nineteenth century has been, and is, clearer, fuller teaching about sin.

(1) *Some definition of sin.* We are all of course familiar with the

terms "sin" and "sinners." We talk frequently of "sin" being in the world, and of men "committing sins." But what do we mean by these terms and phrases? Do we really know? I fear there is much ignorance and mental haziness on this point. Let me try, as briefly as possible, to supply an answer. I say, then, that sin, speaking generally, is "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth alway against the Spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Sin, in short, is that vast moral disease which affects the whole human race; a disease from which there never was but one born of woman that was free. Need I say that One was Christ Jesus the Lord?

I say, furthermore, that a sin, to speak more particularly, consists in doing, saying, thinking, or imagining, anything that is not in perfect conformity with the mind and law of God. "Sin," in short, as the Scripture saith, is "the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.)

Of course I need not tell any one who reads his Bible with attention, that a man may break God's law in heart and thought when there is no overt and visible act of wickedness. Our Lord has settled that point beyond dispute in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. v. 21-28.)

But I do think it necessary in these times to remind my readers that a man may commit sin and yet be ignorant of it, and fancy himself innocent when he is guilty. We shall do well to remember, that when we make our own miserably imperfect knowledge and consciousness the measure of our sinfulness, we are on very dangerous ground.

(2) *The origin and source of this vast moral disease called sin.* Let us have it fixed down in our minds that the sinfulness of man does not begin from without, but from within. It is not the result of bad training in early years; it is not picked up from bad companions and bad examples, as some weak Christians are too fond of saying. No! it is a family disease, which we all inherit from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and with which we are born. Created "in the image of God," innocent and righteous at first, our parents fell from original righteousness and became sinful and corrupt. "By one man sin entered into the world."—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh."—"We are by nature children of wrath."—"The carnal mind is enmity against God."—"Out of the heart, (naturally as out of a fountain,) proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," and the like. (John iii. 6; Eph. ii. 2; Rom. viii. 7; Mark vii. 21.) The fairest babe that has entered life this year, as it lies smiling and crowing in its cradle, carries in its heart the seeds of every kind of wickedness! Only watch it carefully as it grows in stature and its mind developes, and you will see in it the buds and germs of deceit, evil temper, selfishness, self-will, obstinacy, greediness, envy, jealousy, passion, which, if indulged and let alone, will shoot up with painful rapidity. Who taught the child these things? Where did he learn them? The Bible alone can answer these questions.

Of all the things that parents say about their children there is none worse than the common saying,— "My son has a good heart at the bottom." The truth, unhappily, is diametrically the other way. The first cause of all sin lies in the natural corruption of the boy's own heart.

(3) *The extent of this vast moral disease.* The only safe ground here is that which is laid for us in Scripture.

It is a disease which pervades and runs through every part of our moral constitution, and every faculty of our minds. The understanding, the affections, the reasoning powers, the will, are all more or less infected. Even the conscience is so blinded that it cannot be depended on as a sure guide, unless it is enlightened by the Holy Ghost. In short, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness about us. The disease may be veiled under a thin covering of courtesy, politeness, good manners, and outward decorum; but it lies deep down in the constitution.

I admit fully that man has many grand and noble faculties left about him, and that in arts, and sciences, and literature, he shows immense capacity. But the fact still remains that he has no natural knowledge, or love, or fear of God. All this is a sore puzzle to those who sneer at "God's word written." But it is a knot that we can untie with the Bible in our hands. And we say that nothing solves the complicated problem of man's condition but the doctrine of sin and the crushing effects of the fall.

Let us remember, beside this, that every part of the world bears testimony to the fact that sin is the universal disease of all mankind. Search the globe from east to west and from pole to pole, the report will be always the same. The remotest islands in the Pacific Ocean, completely separate from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, beyond the reach alike of Oriental luxury and Western arts and literature,—ignorant of books, steam, and gunpowder,—uncontaminated by the vices of modern civilization,—these very islands have always been found, when first discovered, the abode of the vilest forms of lust, cruelty, deceit, and superstition. If the inhabitants have known nothing else, they have always known how to sin.

(4) *The guilt, vileness, and offensiveness of sin in the sight of God.* I do not think, in the nature of things, that mortal man can at all realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sight of that holy and perfect One with whom we have to do. The blind man can see no difference between a masterpiece of Titian or Raphael, and the Queen's head on a village signboard. The deaf man cannot distinguish between a penny whistle and a cathedral organ. And man, fallen man, I believe, can have no just idea what a vile thing sin is in the sight of that God whose handiwork is absolutely perfect. But let us nevertheless settle it firmly in our minds that sin is "the abominable thing that God hateth;"—that God "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon that which is evil;"—that the least transgression of God's law makes us "guilty of all;"—that "the soul that sinneth shall die;"—that "the wages of sin is death;"—that God shall "judge the secrets of men;"—that there is a worm that never dies, and a fire that is not quenched;—that "the wicked shall be turned into hell," and shall "go away into everlasting punishment;"—and that "nothing that defiles shall in anywise enter" heaven. (Jer. xlv. 4; Hab. i. 13; James ii. 10; Ezek. xviii. 4; Rom. vi. 23; Rom. ii. 16; Mark ix. 44; Ps. ix. 17; Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xxi. 27.) These are indeed tremendous words, when we consider that they are written in the Book of a most merciful God!

No proof of the sinfulness of sin, after all, is so overwhelming and unanswerable as the cross and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Terribly black must that guilt be for which nothing but the blood of the Son of God could make satisfaction.

(5) One point only remains, on the subject of sin. That point is *its*

deceitfulness. You may see this deceitfulness in the wonderful proneness of men to regard sin as less sinful and dangerous than it is in the sight of God; and in their readiness to extenuate it, and make excuses for it. "It is but a little one! God is merciful! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss! We mean well! One cannot be so particular! Where is the mighty harm? We only do as others!" Who is not familiar with this kind of language?—You may see it in the long string of smooth words and phrases which men have coined in order to designate things which God calls downright wicked and ruinous to the soul. What do such expressions as "fast," "gay," "wild," "unsteady," "thoughtless," "loose," mean? They show that men try to cheat themselves into the belief that sin is not quite so sinful as God says it is, and that they are not so bad as they really are. We may give wickedness smooth names, but we cannot alter its nature and character in the sight of God.

Let us sit down before the picture of sin displayed to us in the Bible, and consider what guilty, vile, corrupt creatures we all are in the sight of God. What need we all have of that entire change of heart called new birth, or conversion! I am persuaded the more light we have, the more we see our own sinfulness. In every age of the church you will find it true, if you will study biographies, that the most eminent saints—men like Bradford, Rutherford, and M'Cheyne

—have always been the humblest men.

On the other hand, I ask you to observe how deeply thankful we ought to be for the glorious gospel of the grace of God. There is a remedy revealed for man's need, as wide, and broad, and deep as man's disease. We need not be afraid to look at sin, and study its nature, origin, power, extent, and vileness, if we only look at the same time at the almighty medicine provided for us in the salvation that is in Jesus. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded.

We may depend upon it, men will never come to Jesus, and stay with Jesus, and live for Jesus, unless they know why they are to come, and what is their need. Those whom the Spirit draws to Jesus are those whom the Spirit has convinced of sin. Without real conviction of sin men may seem to come to Jesus and follow him for a season, but they will soon fall away and return to the world. Once let us see that sin is far nearer to us, and sticks more closely to us than we suppose, and we shall be led, I believe, to get nearer to Christ. Abiding in him, we shall bear more fruit, shall find ourselves more strong for duty, more patient in trial, and more like our Master in all our little daily ways. Just in proportion as we realize how much Christ has done for us, shall we labour to do much for Christ.

Bishop Ryle.

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THE "WASTED" SERMON.



See p. 2.

DARK clouds were gathering in the western sky. A storm was rapidly approaching. A cloud of disappointment overshadowed the minister's face, as he stood by his study window, hoping against hope that the storm might pass over. He turned back to his desk and sighed as he took up the sermon he had just been reading over.

"Is it not hard?" he said to his wife, who was sitting in her low chair before the open grate; "even the weather seems to have entered into league with everything else to defeat my hopes. This is the last Sunday before communion, and I spent so much labour on these two sermons, thinking that surely some good would come of them; but only

two of those whom I had especially in my mind were there to hear this morning's sermon. Brother Henderson's new organ proved a superior attraction, and they went to hear it. Now this evening I cannot hope for an audience, for this storm looks as if it would break just about church-time. I have a great mind to preach an old sermon, for I have spent so much labour on this one, and hoped for so much from it, that I cannot bear to waste it on a few."

"It is hard," responded his wife sympathetically, as she came to his side and looked out at the lowering sky; "but, dearest, you know *who* will choose your audience this evening. Do you think it would be better to lay aside the sermon you have prepared especially for this evening because the weather is so unpropitious, than to preach it in faith that God will not let his word return unto him void?"

The minister shook his head.

"Perhaps you are right," he said; "that is a question I have never been able to settle satisfactorily in my own mind, whether I have any right to reserve a sermon that I have prepared for a special occasion. I will preach this one to-night, that I may err on the safe side if I err at all."

Great drops began to patter down as they left the house, and before they had gained the shelter of the church the rain was coming down in torrents. One by one the faithful few who were always in their accustomed places, despite wind or storm, struggled in, and just as the second bell stopped ringing, three of those over whom the pastor had yearned came in, and it was with a hope that his appeal might reach these three hearts at least that he began the service.

A prayer rose upward from his heart as he rose to preach. The feeling that his message was directed especially to these three souls which

had not yet found the Saviour lent him unusual energy and power. His text was the precious invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) His hearers could not but be impressed by the earnestness and solemnity of his appeal, as he urged them to accept the precious invitation, and find the rest and peace which passeth all understanding.

As the notes of the last hymn echoed through the church, the storm seemed to rage less furiously for a time, and a man who had been standing in the vestibule, unseen by either minister or people, raised his umbrella and went out into the darkness again, with the words of the hymn, "Delay not, delay not," following him until he passed out of hearing. He had sought refuge there from the storm just before the sermon, and had been an unseen listener through the remainder of the service. He had glanced at the array of empty pews, and the small congregation scattered about the church, with a smile half of amusement, half of contempt.

"A storm like this sifts a church pretty thoroughly," he said to himself. "In spite of all their professions there are few that care enough for their soul's salvation to seek it in such weather. I suppose the minister will save a sermon by it, however; for no doubt he will either give them an old one or let them go without any."

The door leading from the vestibule into the church was ajar, so he heard every word of the sermon without any effort to do so. He listened with an interest that he was surprised at. It was his boast that he could live, and had always lived and prospered, without religion. He was a successful lawyer, with genial manners which made him universally popular. He was charit-

able and generous, not from any sense of duty, but from a kindness of heart that made him willing to do anything to alleviate suffering or distress in others, and no man could have led a more upright life than he did.

He believed himself to be thoroughly sincere, and he was merciless in discovering inconsistencies in the lives of those who professed to be Christians. He was the leader of a large circle of young men who, admiring his character and talents, followed his example implicitly in regard to religious matters. He had not entered the doors of a church for years, and it was only the fury of the elements that had driven him to seek a temporary shelter there this evening. Had the sermon been argumentative he would have sought arguments to mentally refute it. But it was nothing of the kind; it was an earnest appeal to all to come to the Saviour, and he could not doubt but that the speaker spoke from his heart.

A strange longing to know somewhat of this joy and peace in believing came over him, as he stood there alone in the darkness, but he shook off the feeling half angrily. Still there was a fascination that held him to the spot until the sermon was concluded, and the hymn read. He walked homeward rapidly, trying to banish the train of thought suggested by the words he had heard, but his attempts were useless. He sat by the glowing fire in his own room, while the storm raged without, and tried to comprehend this new feeling which had taken possession of him.

"It is the weather," he muttered to himself, impatiently drawing the heavy curtains together, that they might deaden the sound of the wind and rain. But he could not as easily shut out this unusual depression. He remained up late, and retired only to toss restlessly on his pillow and hear again the words, "Come unto me,

and I will give you rest." Rest! That was what he longed for; but how could he give up his unbelief, his arguments, and go to the Saviour whom he had rejected all his life?

"That sermon was utterly wasted," said the minister to his wife when they reached home, "for old Mr. S—— slept through it, and it is evident enough that the two girls present paid no heed to it. And yet I cannot blame myself, for I did my utmost. If I had had a hundred unconverted souls before me I could not have tried more earnestly to win them. I was so terribly in earnest myself to-night that I felt as if I surely had reached some heart, but you see how entirely I failed. I have lost heart and hope."

"Don't say that," answered his wife. "You have done your part,—now trust the Lord to do his part." But she could not cheer her husband's depressed spirits.

The next morning, when he was enjoying the late breakfast that was his Monday morning privilege, the door-bell rang, and a card was brought in to him.

"Mr. L——!" he ejaculated, in surprise. "What can he have come for?" He left his unfinished breakfast and went into the parlour.

Minutes passed away into an hour, and still Mrs. N—— heard the continuous sound of voices in low, earnest conversation, and she grew somewhat annoyed at this untimely visitor, who had interrupted her husband's breakfast. At last she heard the sound of retreating footsteps, and the opening and closing of the front door. She replaced the dishes which she had been keeping warm upon the hearth. When the door opened, and her husband re-entered the room, she was struck with the look of solemn joy on his face.

"Truly God's word did not return unto him void last evening," he said, with a glad ring in his voice.

"The storm was his messenger to bring one within the church who might otherwise never have entered it. Mr. L—— was driven by the tempest to seek shelter within the doors of the church, and he heard the sermon which I thought was wasted. It has already brought forth fruit, by God's blessing, for Mr. L—— came this morning, as humbly as a child, to ask the way to his Saviour. May God forgive me for my lack of faith in his power, and to him be all the glory."

Mr. L——'s openly professed allegiance to his new Master was but the first fruit of that sermon. Those who had imitated him in his indifference to religion followed his lead now, and a new spiritual life was infused into the church, the beginning of which could be traced back to that stormy evening when Mr. N—— preached the sermon which, in his ignorance of the workings of providence, he had condemned as *wasted*.

Friend! while you have been reading this tract, have you been like the man listening in the darkness outside the church-door? It may be that while up to this hour a hater of the truth, and doing all you can to escape from it, you may yet in your secret heart have "a strange longing to know somewhat of this joy and peace in believing." Many "Monthly Visitors" may have come to you,—but, as the minister thought of his sermon, they may have hitherto seemed to be all "wasted." God grant that with this one it may not

be so. Whatever you may in the past have been, or thought, or said, or done, that word of life and peace is as full and as free to you NOW as if you had never once refused it: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.). Think of it!

"HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS."

HEBREWS iii. 8.

There is a time, we know not when,—
A point, we know not where,—
That marks the destiny of men,
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path,—
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

To pass that limit, is to die,—
To die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health;

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirit light and gay;
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away.

O where is this mysterious bourn
By which our path is crossed!
Beyond which, God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?

How far may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin
The confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent:
"Ye that from God depart,
While it is called to-day, repent,
And harden not your heart."

J. A. Alexander, 1847.

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"AS FOR ME."

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."— JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



See p. 2.

JOSHUA knew that the people who surrounded him were nominally worshippers of Jehovah, but in very deed many of them had turned aside unto strange gods. Now, being a thorough-going, decided, down-right man, Joshua could not endure double-mindedness, and therefore he pushed the people to decision, urging them to serve the Lord with sincerity, and, if they did so, to put away altogether all their graven images. He shut them up to a present choice, between the true God and the idols,

and gave them no rest in their half-heartedness.

To compel them to avow their decision, he declared his own. "So far as myself and my sons and my daughters are concerned, the die is cast, and Jehovah alone will we serve."

We admire fidelity in Joshua, and we confess that he needed it; but we may, perhaps, forget that there never was an age in which decision for God was not equally required. It is well to admire this in another, but it is far better to possess it ourselves.

I. DECISION FOR THE LORD.

First, let me DESCRIBE it. It means many things, all of which must be wrought in us by divine grace, or we shall never possess them, though we may have their counterfeits. Decision implies, first, that all *hesitation is gone*. There is a period when the thoughtful mind hangs in the balance, and it is a question which way the scale will turn. This was all over in the case of Joshua. Joshua had a mind of his own, and he knew his own mind. Resolve was taken, and consequently action was forcible and ardent. And now, dear friends, it is surely time with each one of us, especially with those of us who have reached the prime of life, that we too had done with the fickleness of irresolution. Have we not had enough of hesitation, deliberating, and trifling and delaying?

This state of heart indicates *superiority to the evil influence of others*. God waits to guide us, but he would have us cry to him, and not follow the trail of our fellows. The great guide of the world is fashion, and its god is respectability—two phantoms, at which brave men laugh. How many of you look around on society to know what to do; you study the popular breeze and shift your sails to suit it. True men do not so. You ask—Is it fashionable? If it be fashionable, it must be done. Fashion is the law of multitudes,

but it is nothing more than the common consent of fools. The world has its fashions in religion as well as in dress, and many of you feel the influence of it. What are ye but babes, fit for the nursery and the sucking-bottle? If ye were men, ye would stand on your own feet, and not need carrying in arms.

"Dare to be a Daniel!

Dare to stand alone!

Dare to have a purpose true,

And dare to make it known!"

Right decision for God is deep, calm, clear, fixed, well-grounded, and solemnly made. Joshua does not speak his determination lightly. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord:" as much as if he had said, "I have known my God too many years to forsake him now." He speaks as one who has weighed the matter, counted the cost, and come to a decision which he can defend against all comers. "As for me and my house, *we will*, despite crowds and customs,—*we will*, despite temptations and trials,—*we will*, despite idols or devils,—to the end of the chapter serve Jehovah."

That resolve on the part of Joshua was *openly avowed*. That is sorry courage which skulks behind the bushes; that is questionable decision which dares not own itself to be on the Lord's side. Remember how the Lord Jesus said, "He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven." O my brethren, can you hesitate?

In Joshua's case his resolve was not only openly avowed, but *earnestly carried out*. Some have their names down in the church book, and they attend to the outward ordinances, but as for any serving the Lord, you will have to search for it, and search in vain. Many professors do not understand what this means: they view religion as a kind of off-hand farm; they have another estate, which is their home and main care,

and the kingdom of God is an off-hand farm, to be mainly managed by the minister as a bailiff. Their religion gets their spare time and odd thoughts. They are seen at prayer-meetings when there are no accounts to settle, and no new books to read; and they do something for the church of God when they have nothing on hand, no friend coming to spend the evening with them, and no amusement available. Better die, than live so dishonestly. Certain servants of great men are kept merely for show. You shall go into my lord's house, and see a fine fellow who is paid a considerable income. What does he do? He is not kept to do anything, he is the ornament of the establishment; the display of that beautiful form, which looks so well in livery, is all his master gets. Surely some Christians suppose that they are engaged on the same terms, and that the Lord Jesus Christ, having their names in his church book, is perfectly satisfied, though they do nothing. These are the fellows who are everlastingly grumbling at those who do serve, and so become the pests of the church. Be ye not like them. With real labour serve ye the Lord, to whose free grace and dying love you owe your all.

Once more. Joshua's decision was adhered to throughout the whole of his life. He had begun early in the service of God, and he never repented of it. A hundred years rolled over his head, but we never discover in him any desire to take up with the service of Baal; he continued to the last true to the resolve, "We will serve Jehovah." Happy are we, brethren, if grace enlisted us in the service of Christ while we were yet young; happier still if grace has kept us to middle age still firm in our young resolve; and happiest of all shall we be if when our hair is grey we shall be able to say, "O God, thou hast been my God from my

youth; . . . Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not." My Lord and master never turns off his old servants, nor do his old servants ever run away from him; the more they serve him, the more they wish to serve him. Blessed are they who have this abiding thoroughness in the cause of the Lord their God.

II. Let me now PRAISE DECISION. In religion nothing is more desirable than to be out and out in it. Some of you are ill at ease at sea, but my friend in the blue jacket over yonder likes it well enough, for he is always there; his home is on the rolling wave, and there are no sea-sicknesses for him. Those of you who make short trips upon the sea of piety, and do a little coasting religion now and then, are sick with doubts and fears; but if you sailed always on that sea, you would gain full assurance, and see the glories of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.

Decision for God enables a man to direct his way. A man who resolves that he will serve the Lord knows his way about the world. Something will happen to you in business to-morrow, you will have a fine chance, you will be able to make a deal of money, but it will be by sailing very near the wind, and you would rather not have the transaction published in *The Times*. When that temptation comes before you, how will you act? Nine out of every ten questions which can possibly come before you in your business are already answered when the grand question is settled. Is such an action dishonest? Then however profitable it might be, it is dismissed as quite beyond consideration.

Thorough-going men *wield a mighty influence*. Joshua was able to speak for his house as well as for himself. Many fathers cannot speak for themselves, and therefore you may guess the reason why they cannot speak for their families. I have

known a Christian woman to be so low in grace, that she never influenced one of her children to desire to be like her; and I have heard of fathers, who we hope were Christian men, whose force to repel from piety was greater than their power to attract to it. God give us more vitality in our own religion, and we shall influence our children and servants, and from them the savour will spread all around.

III. I close by DEMANDING THIS DECISION FOR CHRIST. If the Christian religion be a lie, it is a most detestable one, and it ought to be abhorred heartily; but if the service of God be indeed right, and if religion be a matter of fact, it demands our whole heart, and soul, and strength; nor should it have less. My dear hearer, look at yourself for a moment. Is there much in you, taking the largest estimate you can of yourself? Compare yourself with the thrice holy God. Those archangels who bow before him are as nothing in his sight; what must *you* be? And if you as a whole are so little, do you dream of dividing yourself, and giving God a part? Shall *you*, you insignificant creature, talk of dividing yourself between God and mammon? If, after all, the world and the things thereof be best, say so and take your side; and if not another person should do it, say in your heart, "As for me and my house, we will serve ourselves and the world." If you mean it, say it out straight, and do not cloak it. But for a man to say, "I cannot determine what I shall serve, but I rather think I shall

serve myself till I get pretty nearly worn out, and then I shall turn about and try what is to be done with religion," is detestable.

And not to decide for the Lord is dangerous in the last degree. "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. iii. 15, 16.) Who is this offensive one? He was a harmless, good sort of person, moderate, sober, easy-going—in fact a lukewarm man. He was neither cold nor hot. Yes, and Christ said he loathed him.

I can see where you are, you betweenites. But, my hearers, *where are you?* Where are you? "We are thinking about it." But *where are you* while you are thinking? "We are considering and judging." But *where are you now?* Mark this! and be one thing or the other.

Remember that to be between the two is, after all, utterly impossible. You are either dead or alive, either justified or condemned, either in the gall of bitterness, or enjoying the sweets of liberty. No man can serve two masters, and no man can be without a master. God will not have half the soul, and the world will not have half the soul. When you get home write this down if you can, "*As for me, I will serve the Lord.*" Put your name to it in earnest. Or, if this is not to your mind, write, "*As for me, I will serve the world,*" and put your name to it. I long to drive you to decision. Oh, may the Spirit of God lead you to decide for God and his Christ this very moment.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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POOR TOM; OR, "WHAT AM I TO DO!"

"I know thy poverty, but thou art rich."—REV. ii. 9.



See p. 2.

IN a seaport town in the south of England, there lived a poor man named Tom —. His history was a sad one. His mind was weak; so much so, that he was counted by those among whom he lived as silly and

half-witted; and add to this, he was notorious for everything that was bad. He earned a wretched livelihood by selling pies and sweetmeats in low taverns and public-houses. There he was made the

sport and "song of the drunkard." No voice was louder than his in uttering oaths and blasphemies; and as he was seen staggering with his basket along the street, mocked by some and pitied by others, he might well have been taken for that most mournful sight,—“a chief of sinners.”

One day he was strolling down one of the dark alleys or closes of the town, with his basket on his arm, seeking to earn a few pence, to spend the evening in riot and sin. He came to the door of a miserable hovel, where there was a poor dying sailor. As he was just entering, he heard these words coming from the lips of the dying man,—

“I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

He was struck with the words. He stood and listened again. Still the same thing reached his ear,—

“I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

The Spirit of God took these lines and fastened them “as a nail” in his guilty bosom. He left the place; but the words would not leave *him*. In vain did he try to forget or to banish them; for this still seemed to ring in his ears day and night,—

“I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

How wondrous are God's dealings! He loves “the gates of Zion.” It is there especially he “commands the blessing, even life for evermore.” But he is not confined to “temples made with hands.” This crimson-stained sinner comes to one of the lowliest “dwellings of Jacob;” and an aged sailor, standing on the brink of the grave, is made the messenger of mercy to his guilty soul. *An aged sailor*,—one who, having braved many a rude storm on the world's rough ocean, was just completing the longer voyage of life. The haven was in view. He was approaching

the quiet shores of glory. He may, in his day, have thrown out many a rope from his vessel's side to save those who were sinking in the storm. God calls him now to save a sinking *soul*. A wretched castaway is struggling in the ocean of eternal death. But from his dying bed the old seaman heaves a *more* lasting—an *everlasting* rope. The other grasps it, and is saved! How simple its two-fold cord! and yet it contains in it the whole gospel,—

“I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

“What am I to do! what am I to do!” exclaimed poor Tom to himself as he wandered up and down the streets with the strange voice still ringing in his ear. Return to his old haunts and companions he could not; for in vain could he ask *them* the new question, which now left no room for any other, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” He bethought himself that he would go to some Christian friends, and beg them to give him the loan of a hymn book, to see if he could discover anything there about the dying sailor's words. But he sought over all the book in vain,—they were not to be found. He next thought he would search through the New Testament in quest of them. Still he could not find them. But as he read the book of grace, he thought he found in it the *spirit* and *meaning* of the lines he had heard, though he failed in finding the *words* themselves. Here it was Jesus revealed himself to him, as he did to his disciples of old on their way to Emmaus. The Lord opened his understanding to understand the Scripture; and expounded to him “the things concerning himself.” (Luke xxiv. 28.) Poor Tom found it still to be “a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, *of whom he was the chief*.”

One day he went to return his hymn book to the kind friends who had given it. They were startled with his singular request. "I wish," said he, in an earnest tone, "to go to the Lord's table, for

" 'I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all ;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all ;'

and he has commanded all those that love him, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' "

"What!" said they in astonishment; "it is impossible for you to think of this; you, who are a swearer, and drunkard, and profane person, would only dishonour Jesus, and bring fearful guilt on your already guilty soul." "Well," said Tom,

" 'I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all ;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all ;'

and he went away. They were struck with his whole appearance and manner; and a little after, they resolved to request a minister to go and visit him. He went; and on Tom again making known to him his wish to partake of the Lord's Supper, this faithful servant of the Lord warned him of the awful guilt and danger of a profane sinner venturing on such holy ground.

"You are aware," said the minister, "that this sacrament is only for the people of God. There is no standing-room there for the drunkard and blasphemer; and your character is too well known for everything that is sinful."

To this he had no other reply but,—

" 'I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all ;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all ;'

and I should like to do what Jesus said we ought."

The minister evidently saw there was something more than nature working here. He made inquiry into his private history. He found that he had, all at once, abandoned his evil courses and abominable sins. More-

over, in order that his old temptations might be avoided, and his old companions shunned, his very basket had been laid aside, as if he had now "counted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge" of Him who was his "all in all." It was a wondrous triumph of grace—"a brand plucked from the burning." Who was "weaker," or "baser," or more "foolish," than this poor outcast? What a comment on the apostle's words: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. i. 27-29.)

Soon was the half-witted profligate seen, like the maniac in the gospel, "sitting clothed, and in his right mind," at the feet of Jesus. He was welcomed by many Christians as a fellow-guest at their Lord's table on earth, and as a fellow-pilgrim to the better banqueting-table above. He lived with "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," keeping his heart; adorning his profession with a consistent walk and life; and always appearing cheerful and happy. One day he received a visit from some Christians interested in his case. They observed his cheerfulness, and remarked to him, "How is it, Tom, you seem to be in the enjoyment of so much happiness?"

"Oh!" replied he, "perhaps the reason is you all wish to be SOMETHING; but

" 'I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all ;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.' "

Dear reader, happy it will be for you if you can take these words as your history. Let them follow you wherever you go. Let them accom-

pany you to your worldly business. Let them be your safeguard in the hour of temptation. Let them be on your lips as you kneel by your evening bedside. Let them form the thought of your waking hours, and the burden of your morning prayer. In prosperity they will rejoice you. In sorrow they will comfort you. In sickness they will soothe you. In death they will support you. In judgment they will acquit you.

We read of a multitude who shall stand, on the last day, at the gate of heaven. Many among them will be heard calling, "Lord! Lord! open unto us!" But the door will be shut upon them, with the awful words, "I know ye not!" (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) Another of that vast company approaches, and knocks. A voice from within demands, "What is thy plea? Dost thou fancy thyself 'rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing'?" The reply is,—

"I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

It is enough. The door is opened. He is welcomed in; and as he passes upwards to the glories of the New Jerusalem, and takes his place among the blood-bought thousands who are casting their crowns before the throne, he listens to their song. Every ransomed voice sings it. Eternity only deepens it,—

"We WERE poor sinners, and nothing at all;
But JESUS CHRIST is our ALL in ALL!"

"THIS POOR MAN CRIED, AND THE LORD HEARD HIM, AND SAVED HIM OUT OF ALL HIS TROUBLES. O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD: BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN HIM." (PSALM XXXIV. 6, 8.)

"THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS; OF WHOM I AM CHIEF. HOWBEIT FOR THIS CAUSE I OBTAINED MERCY, THAT IN ME FIRST JESUS CHRIST MIGHT SHEW FORTH ALL LONGSUFFERING, FOR A PATTERN TO THEM WHICH SHOULD HEREAFTER BELIEVE ON HIM TO LIFE EVERLASTING." (1 TIMOTHY I. 15, 16.)

CHRIST IS ALL.

Jesus, my Saviour, look on me!
For I am weary and opprest;
I come to cast my soul on thee:
Thou art my *rest*. Ps. cxvi. 7.

I am bewildered on my way;
Dark and tempestuous is the night;
O shed thou forth some cheering ray:
Thou art my *light*. Ps. xxvii. 1.

Why feel I desolate and lone?
Thy praises should my thoughts employ;
Thy presence can pour gladness down:
Thou art my *joy*. 1 Pet. i. 8.

When the Accuser flings his darts,
I look to thee—my terrors cease;
Thy cross a hiding-place imparts:
Thou art my *peace*. Eph. ii. 14.

Vain is all human help for me,
I dare not trust an earthly prop;
My sole reliance is on thee:
Thou art my *hope*. Jer. xvii. 7, 17.

Thou wilt my every want supply
E'en to the end, whate'er befall:
Through life, in death, eternally,
Thou art my *all*. Col. iii. 11.

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A FATHER'S MEMORY.



My father was blind during the last seventeen years of his life,—a blind old man, but not a blind disciple. It was a dark world to him; but his heart was not dark. Jesus dwelt there. Doubtless he saw Jesus, and the Father's glory in the face of Jesus, all the clearer because other things were dark. It is the privilege of night to bring out the stars. My father's

night brought heaven near to him. While the old man went his way through that long dark avenue of years, not a murmur passed his lips. He was patient in tribulation; calm, contented, peaceful to the last.

He died in his eighty-seventh year. How old his piety was I cannot tell; I am not sure that he himself could tell. If piety be real, we need

not be too curious about its age; and it may be ripe without being very old. The first thing I knew about my father was his piety; he was of middle age, and it was ripe then. From the first it was like the meat and drink on which my spirit subsisted. I feel as if it were at this moment in my bones.

His religion was not violent or obtrusive; it was more felt than seen; it made no noise. When it spoke, it spoke in natural tones; and while it did not despise the ear, it had a special love for the heart and understanding. Under it we children came to know, in the quietest possible way, that God was good, and greatly to be feared because he was so good. The Saviour's name, his gentle life, his bitter cross, his bright resurrection, his heavenly glory, his all-availing intercessions; these, and such like were in various ways wafting their sacred influence around us and into us every day.

The old hearth is cold; but the old home will never be cold until it ceases to be remembered, and while heaven lasts, that time will be far distant. The following are some elements whereby, in the Bethel of my father's house, his Christian life was breathed into us

1. *His blessing asked at meals.*—This was not long, but it was spoken with great solemnity; so much so, that each simple meal had the air, if not the virtue, of a sacrament. He began, "O infinitely great and glorious, and highly exalted Jehovah;" bowing his head, and with his left hand held out, and kept moving to the modulation of his voice, and this again as deep-drawn as it could be, and all in a tremble, as if labouring with a larger soul in it than it could well hold. Thus, several times every day, we felt carried heavenward as on the wings of a great eagle. What an

impression it gave us of God's mercy, in food and in forgiveness! For it was all asked, with pardon of sins, "for Jesus the Redeemer's sake." It must work for great evil on the minds of children when grace is said gracelessly, as if meant to tell God and man that we are *not* thankful.

2. *His family worship.*—In home phrase, this was to "tak' the Book." The door was "snibbed," to prevent intrusion. Father and mother at opposite sides of the hearth, the children circling about their feet, the words "Let us worship God" were spoken, and then we all felt that the place and the moments were not our own. It was God's house,—a beautiful commingling of his house and ours; for still it was our home, only lifted up, as it were, and set down for the time being at the feet of God. We were at the top of Jacob's ladder; the breath of heaven was about us; visions of angels passed and re-passed before the inward eye while the psalm was being sung, the chapter read, the prayer offered up. What sincerity in the eye, what sobriety on the brow, what sacred awe at heart on these occasions!

Father's voice is best remembered in prayer,—mother's in the psalm-singing. The most difficult family worship we ever had was at her dying bed, where we sang, or tried to sing, her favourite psalm, the 23rd, and her favourite tune, "Scarborough." Hard our struggling was to keep the melody from being broken, and to keep the heart itself from breaking. But we did get through; and when we were at the last verse,—

"And in God's house for evermore,
My dwelling place shall be,"—

she gently passed away. Most fitly, the chariot that carried her home was praise.

The psalm most often used by my father in worship was the 40th,—

“I waited for the Lord my God;”

and I know that the idea thus imparted of waiting upon God has been a wonderful help to me numberless times. When God veiled his face and all seemed going wrong, I have said to my impatient soul, “*Wait a wee*,” and this motto of my old home has never failed to render me angelic service,—my only regret is that it has been too seldom trusted.

3. *His family discipline.*—He ruled his house well. His discipline was of a godly kind. It was severe, without being in any way grim. His motive in it all was love; his aim, reverence and obedience. We owned him as God’s vicar—God’s prophet, priest, and king to us. His authority, usually mild, became stern when it was tampered with, and did not delay in judgment. Sometimes the stroke would come with swiftness, and make both ears tingle; but rarely if ever undeserved. To look back on the discipline, it seems grandly patriarchal. It was ever guarding us against ourselves, and doing it as tenderly as possible. Like the discipline of God, when it came with severity, it was only to shield us from something severer than itself.

Two things in the house, besides the Bible, seemed to show what my father’s spirit was made of,—an old broadsword, with basket hilt, that lay aside under the bed; and the *tawse*, hanging at the fireside. Types of religion, freedom, and headship of a family,—the Bible, the broadsword, and the “tawse.” There is nothing due but thankfulness for what one suffered under that “old economy.”

4. *His Sabbath-keeping.*—It was not sombre; but sober. The realities of the other world seemed to descend upon us. The quiet of the house

was great. We walked softly; we talked softly. Week-day things were laid aside. Our food and clothing were changed. We had our best to put on, and our best to eat. It was a fast day, in one sense; a feast day, in a better sense. If all was not felt to be at its best, we children understood well enough that the fault was ours. It was what *ought* to be best. We understood that our books, our tasks, our behaviour, our demeanour, were to be such as became the children of a King. For the time being, we were heaven’s own.

Well do I remember how mother, with her “specs” on, and with an exquisite play of grace and humour about her mouth, used to scan the page we were reading, to see if there were any good words on it. She had a quaint way of chanting while reading the old psalms, whereby those Sabbath evenings were made very musical; and as there was more melody in her heart than her voice could hold, it came out also in the swaying of her body to and fro, and in the motion of her foot beating time upon the floor.

Not more pathos in this than there was of patriarchal dignity in father’s catechizing, whereby impressions, noble and eternal, were given us of “man’s chief end,”—“to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.” No doubt, our Sabbath-keeping was strictly ordered; but the power of God was in it unto salvation, and it seems inexpressibly beautiful and sweet to look back upon.

5. *His church-going.*—Our family pew was as familiar to us as our family board. My father’s heart was in the sanctuary. We loved it for his sake, and he taught us to love it for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s. We were always there, in one compact group. It was the lifting up of our house bodily into the house of God, which we felt to be both bigger and better than our own.

Thus our sympathies were widened. We were but part of a larger family; and our home was but one of "many mansions" in the great Father's house.

Though in very humble circumstances, father never entered church without a cheerful offering. His gift was always a sacrifice; and in this we all took part. No one, from the oldest to the youngest, was ever allowed to go empty-handed. By the example of the Redeemer's cross, and the faithfulness of God, we were taught to be magnanimous in our small way, and in small things.

6. *His righteousness.*—This was of the law in its strength, but from the gospel in its origin. The love of Jesus kept him right. A poor, helpless sinner, Jesus pitied him: Jesus died for him; the blood of Jesus washed him from his sin; the merit of Jesus was his only plea; the intercessions of Jesus, his hope and confidence. His desire, therefore, ever was that the Redeemer's righteousness, in which he trusted, might be fulfilled in him. To a large extent it was. His only pride was to be free from stain. To do a mean thing was to trample on the Saviour's blood. I well remember with what serene satisfaction and pious punctuality he would go to the landlord, on the very day, with his half-yearly house-rent. Faithfulness was the girdle of his reins. He learned all this sitting humbly at the feet of Jesus, breathing the incense of the cross.

7. *His end*—was peace. His last words were, "The night is far spent,

the day is at hand; He will abide with me." Shortly after, the day-break of heaven dawned on those poor blind eyes. "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me!"

Reader, your own end is not far off; how near, who can tell? You would like it to be peaceful. What have you done to make it peaceful during the bygoing year? What mean you to do ere this year closes? If Christ be the light of your heart, all is well, though all else should be dark. Rough your course may be, but it need not be unhappy; and your end is certain to be peace.

Are you a professed disciple, yet a blind one — blind at heart, while all is light around you? Does not this tract tell you what a Christian life is, what a Christian home is, what a Christian end is?

Reader, the harvest is past, the summer ended, and are you not saved? Are you like one who has lost his senses,—blind to the swift approach of eternity, deaf to the call of mercy, dead as a stone to the tears of Jesus, pleading that you would turn to him and live? Oh, now is the accepted time. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." (Ps. xcv. 7, 8.) "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.)

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“READY, AYE READY!”

A TRACT FOR THE NEW YEAR.



Two young men walked together, one New Year's day, along one of the pleasant highways in the south of Scotland. Full of hope and health, they talked gaily of what they thought might lie before them in their life-course. They spoke of windings and turnings, of the rough

and the smooth, of business and pleasure, of prospects far off or near, certain or uncertain, of the kind of home they should like to have, with all happy surroundings. They passed a church-yard, and the younger of the two, given to strange remarks, abruptly said, "*But what of your coffin?*"

There was silence. The walk ended. Each walked separately homeward. But he to whom the peculiar question was put, could not shake it off. It turned out to be a question for eternity, as well as for the New Year. Five words, yet containing in them a message from heaven.

"My coffin!" he mused, as he went along. "Yes, sooner or later, my coffin must be made, and I must be laid in it. This bit of my future at least is a reality; when it shall be made, or where, I know not; who shall carry me out and mourn over me, I know not: but the thing itself is absolutely certain. It faces me to-day, and I cannot get over it. Each one I meet wishes me a happy New Year, and it is pleasant to hear the good wishes, but the thought now suggested rises up as I look into these coming twelve months, and asks of me the earnest question, 'What is thy life? it is but a vapour which appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away.'"

Ready, or unready,—these are the two words that seem written on the forehead of this New Year. They ask an answer which admits of no delay; for a whole eternity of joy or sorrow depends upon it. Perhaps it is this startling alternative that makes so many unwilling to answer it; deferring it to a more convenient season, lest it should mar the mirth of a New Year's festival, and blunt the edge of the world's favourite song, "Taste life's glad moments." Yet the answer to that question will be forced upon us sooner or later; and the day is coming, whether it be New Year's day or not, on which we must write with our own hand, for eternity, "Life or death."

To one of the early kings of England was given the name of "Ethelred the *Unready*," inasmuch as he was always behind time, whether for the tournament or the

battle. The motto of one of our old Scottish families was "Ready, aye ready." In the great Indian Mutiny, at a special emergency, when instant help was needed, the General issued the order, "Send for Havelock's regiment; his men are always ready."

"Always ready": this is the motto of each Christian man and woman. Whatever be the number of the months and days before him,—whatever be the troubles, vexations, sorrows, sicknesses before him,—he is conscious of a readiness that will carry him through all. Slowly or suddenly the crisis will come. Let us not close our eyes and ears against it; it will come! the awful knock will be heard which will awake the soul out of its soundest slumber. Shall it be heard too late?

"They which were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." (Matt. xxv. 10.) Hear, then, the voice which says, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." (Luke xii. 40.)

"I am ready," said a dying man to a visitor. "What makes you think yourself ready?" said the visitor. "I am wrapped up in Christ." "Have you nothing else to say about your readiness?" "Nothing; is not that enough?"

The readiness, then, is the being "wrapped up in Christ." Nor does this wrapping up require long time, or laborious effort, or months of prayer. The thief on the cross was soon wrapped up, and passed into paradise, side by side with Him whose righteousness covered him. It did not require long to cover the poor sinful woman in the temple when brought before the Lord; she came in, all sin from head to foot,—she came out all white and fair; for the words of the Great Forgiver had done their work. "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven

thee,—go and sin no more.” It did not take long to clothe Zacchæus with his new robe; as he passed from the sycamore to his house in company with the Lord, old things passed away, all things became new. It was not a long process that was needed for the covering of the prodigal. The word went out, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him,” (Luke xv. 22;) straightway the ragged garments passed away, and he was clothed from head to foot with the best robe in his father’s house.

The simplicity of this wondrous transfer often stumbles many. They cannot believe that a change so momentous can so easily be accomplished. It will take a lifetime, they say. Nay! not so; if the word of the living God be true, it never did require a lifetime, or even half a lifetime;—nor does it now,—for the change of dress, whereby the sinner from being a child of darkness becomes a child of light, is the doing of Him who said, “Let there be light, and there was light.”

This putting on of Christ is that to which Paul refers when he says, “Be found in Him,” (Phil. iii. 9,) so that, having put him on, we have a new standing before God, and a new name. What we possess of evil he takes; what he possesses of glory and of good passes over to us, and we are forthwith treated by God as possessing claims which Christ only possesses.

We do not pay for this transfer; nor do we work for it. *We simply accept what God presents to us in the person and work of his Son,* as our substitute. It is our acceptance of Christ as our substitute that is the “putting on.” To accept him simply as our example, or as our light, or as our guide, is no “putting on”; but to accept him as the sin-bearer, taking our guilt upon him, and giving us his righteousness, is the true putting on which covers us all over with divine perfection in the sight of God, and gives us true

readiness for death. And thus sings a German poet—

“Had I an angel’s holiness,
I’d lay aside that beauteous dress,
And wrap me up in Christ.”

“Covering” just now before God is what we need, that our deformity may be hidden, and we presented acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. “Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,” (Isa. lxi. 3;) this is the result of the great exchange between Christ and the sinner, which is effected by believing in his name.

It was “covering” that Adam sought when he sewed the fig-leaves together. But that covering was in vain. It is covering that the sinner will cry for in the day of wrath,—covering from the rocks and hills. But hills and rocks are useless. “The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” (Isa. xxviii. 20.) Only one covering can suffice in the great day of descending wrath,—a covering not human, but divine,—prepared not by man, but God.

It is thus that a New Year’s day bids us look into eternity. All round and round we see the mortal. Beyond we see the immortal, and ask what is that immortality to be to us.

“I stood,” writes an old minister, “in a large but quiet city churchyard. I looked round upon the various monuments and tombstones. I tried to count them; but they were so many, and so irregularly placed, that I quite failed in this. Perhaps a hundred thousand; certainly not less. How many tens of thousands more of the dead were there without a tomb, or name, or date!

“I was surrounded with death; and yet all this mass of death had once been life. Nay, all these myriads were *still alive*. Where they were, I could not say. But they were living *somewhere*; yes, *somewhere*. But as

to that "somewhere" what could I tell? The place that knew them, knew them now no more. That was all that could be said. No one had come up out of these tombs to tell whither they had gone.

"On one stone I could read these words of hope, 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore'; on another, a like inscription, 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' These two texts seemed to shine out like stars in a midnight sky, or like flowers in a wilderness. They carried me forward to the day of victory and light, and made me know that the sleeper beneath that stone was anticipating the resurrection of the just.

"There was another tombstone not far off, to which I went, for I knew who was lying there. No text was upon it; and a tomb without a text looks bare. The date of birth and of death was all the record. But I remembered hearing that the buried one had been carried to a sorrowful grave; and that he had said, 'I have lived without hope, and I die without hope. I have learned to despise futurity; my soul will go into nothing the moment it leaves the body.'

"My thoughts wandered into that futurity which was thus despised. I ceased to think of the body, and began to ask myself, 'What of the soul?' Unbelief may try to get quit of dread by saying, 'the soul dies.' But does it die? Does it crumble into atoms; or does God extinguish it?

"No futurity to the soul is all the gospel which some have to give to the troubled! But the existence of

the soul for ever, either in joy or sorrow, is a truth which underlies the whole Bible. It is far easier to extinguish a star than to extinguish a soul. That wondrous thing which we call *existence*, or *being*, is something infinitely great and precious, incapable of being destroyed. We must exist for ever. Most solemnizing truth! We must think *for ever*. We must feel *for ever*. Our being will last as long as God lives.

"But as I stood here and mused, a funeral came by. Who was the 'dead man carried out' I knew not. I saw mourners passing along. I saw where they were going. I saw the open grave, I saw the coffin lowered, the earth filled in, and the turf spread over it. I knew the soul was not buried there. It had gone, I knew not whither. But the words 'the burial of a soul' suggested themselves; though I knew that such a burial was a mere figure of speech.

"The soul's funeral,—what could that mean? In the case of the departed Christian, I could imagine it carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and could think I heard Stephen's words repeated, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' But in the case of the unready, what could it be but the first note of lamentation, and mourning, and woe."

Prepare to meet thy God! Thou MUST meet him, sooner or later. He wants to meet thee in love, for he has no pleasure in thy death. Wilt thou not say, "I will arise and go to my Father"? Then all is well.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1886.

GEORGE THEOPHILUS DODDS,
MISSIONARY TO THE WORKMEN OF PARIS.



—See page 3.

"THE labourers are few." It has been always so. God has worked by the few, not the many; by the feeble, not the strong. The victory has been given to the handful, not to the mighty hosts. The shepherd's sling has done what the sword of the captain could not do. God has said, "The people that are with thee are

too many for me." (Judges vii. 2.) He never said, "They are too few."

It was but a handful that the Lord sent forth to preach his gospel to the millions of earth; yet ere he could trust that gospel to their hands, he struck down two of the foremost,—Stephen first, and then James the brother of John. The

early church could ill spare these men; but God's purpose was to manifest his strength in man's weakness. John the Baptist was cut down in the prime of his manhood, after only a six months' ministry, when all Palestine was waiting to hear his voice.

So was it in France but a few years ago. A young Scotchman went to Paris, well-equipped, and full of faith and zeal, to preach to the workmen of that city; but he had little more than entered on his mission when he was mysteriously arrested, and the life-long ministry to which he had so eagerly looked forward, sorrowfully ended.

It is true that no Christian dies too soon. His life and his death are in the hands of the God only wise. No workman passes away before his time. That which man calls premature death has no place with God. Our regrets for early death are sincere and natural, but faith looks beyond the seen. We speak of the removal of a faithful workman as an irreparable loss, but in doing so we forget Him who has caused it, and who is able to repair it to the full.

GEORGE THEOPHILUS DODDS was born at Lochee, close by Dundee, in the year 1850, and he died at Salbris, in 1882, in the prime of his manhood, in the midst of his work, and looking forward eagerly to days of successful labour in France.

His mind was early turned to the missionary field, and never did he look back. As a child, as a boy, as a youth, as a man, he was always the same in this. He must be a missionary,—he always said. It did not matter to him where he might be placed; but he would not remain at home. Any missionary door would be welcome, and any missionary work would be counted not only acceptable, but honourable. His mother, the daughter of a missionary, had trained him well,

and directed his earliest thoughts to the mission field. In all his after studies the thoughts of mission work mingled; nor would he allow any other prospects to divert his aims from this.

When his studies were finished, he had to decide on what field he would enter,—India, Africa, China, or the distant Polynesian islands. He was willing to go to any of these.

While in this state the mission of Mr. M'All in Paris was brought before him. To his friends and to himself it seemed that he was singularly fitted for the work; and, being already complete master of the French language, he could enter at once upon it. To Paris, then, his steps were directed, and there he settled down, counting on a life of usefulness in association with the venerated and beloved director of the mission. The very first night that he arrived, he was able to take part in one of these strange meetings among the communists of the city, which are quite unique in their character and in the composition of the audience; for none of our great cities furnish the missionary with such a singular mixture of population,—men of no creed and no morals, atheists and Roman Catholics,—yet all willing to listen to what the missionary has to say, and to argue quietly with him. Being most of them men of no religion, they were eager to hear what this new religion was. Religion had been to them a thing most unloving and unloveable. Here is a new religion, that goes to their heart. It deals in love, the great love of God. It presents a pardon, a free pardon, without money or merit. This is new and strange. It attracts, and soothes, and wins. If it is true, they say, it is the very thing for us. What though it comes from a stranger, if it be true, it is not to be despised.

In the midst of such men the Paris missionary stood up and proclaimed the one gospel: it might be in the halls of the mission, or in the villages round about. It was evident even to the most hardened scoffer that he was in earnest. There was nothing selfish in his proceedings. He did not ask money. He did not threaten. He spoke of God's great love to man, in the gift of his beloved Son. He sought their souls, not their money.

Go with him on one of his suburban excursions. He hands about his New Testaments, scattering the seed of truth in a village of infidels. They crowd around him, not to molest or mock, but to hear, and to ask for copies of the strange book. They converse,—not rudely or angrily, but with open ears and eyes, eager to catch the loving words. For all this Mr. Dodds was singularly fitted. He heard what they had to say. He met their objections. He preached the good news. He pointed them to the true Cross. Such village scenes were full of interest, and such excursions not in vain. The soil into which the seed fell was perhaps the worst that could be imagined; but that made the work all the more interesting and wonderful.

Go with him to one of the numerous meetings of the week. It is in a street of poverty and vice. The room is an old wine-shop,—partitions taken down, well-papered and lighted, a plain desk for a pulpit, hung with green baize, and altogether one of the most bright and cheery places that could be imagined. The crowd is great; old and young; sometimes quiet, sometimes restless. He has perhaps that evening to conduct the singing as well as to preach; and he is quite competent to lead it, either with the organ or with his own rich voice. Many may not at first know either tune or words; but hymn-

books are handed round, and after a verse or two has been sung, it is amazing how the tune is picked up, and the whole audience join. There he is quite at home with his strange audience, and they with him. The kindly and hearty hand-shakings at the close form a scene never to be forgotten.

Of these meetings there are now more than thirty in Paris, and about a hundred all over France. What will the harvest be? As yet we see only a little of it; but there is promise of great things.

The life of Mr. Dodds was one of toil. The "heat and burden of the day" he had to bear. Often when coming home, it might be at twelve o'clock at night, or even later, he would throw himself down, with the words, "I am so tired—so tired!" He ought to have rested, but he would not; and the result of over-exhaustion, dreaded by his friends, came at last.

When at length he went to rest, it was too late. His frame was worn out. He could not stand the attack of disease, or resist the effects of the deleterious food which he had unconsciously taken. He did go to the country, but he went to die; and in the prime of his manhood, in his thirty-second year, he was cut down. After twelve days of illness, in much pain and weakness, unable to rally from the dire attack, with only his beloved wife and two dear Christian friends to soothe his death-bed, and gather up his last words, on the afternoon of a bright sunny Saturday of September 1882, he went to be with the Lord whom he had served.

Shortly before his death he was deeply interested in the spiritual state of several who had been awakened, and especially of a poor invalid, an old sceptic, who, after many struggles, had "yielded himself to Christ, out and out." The old man

had said to him on his death-bed, "Before the October leaves fall, I shall be with Christ." He did not know that his beloved teacher was to go before him. His case was a striking one. Nearly every Thursday evening, after meeting, for many months, Mr. Dodds had visited him to tell him of Christ and his cross, though often weary. The man seemed quite careless. But he was dying—dying without hope, and Mr. Dodds could not bear the thought of leaving him thus. The light broke at last. Before going to the country, Mr. Dodds visited him, and bade him farewell, receiving from his own lips the assurance that all was well. He survived till December; and a friend who visited him wrote, that the last time he saw him he could not speak much, but he spoke frequently of Mr. Dodds and his last visit. Over and over again he said, "He kissed me;" and he could not forget this last token of kindness. That last kiss was not to be forgotten. It was something so loving and so rare. It was more than a cup of cold water; and it showed a tenderness of Christian love which few think of manifesting. His teacher was to be in the kingdom before him, and what a surprise would the meeting be. The teacher's last kiss filled his whole soul with gladness. It told him of the everlasting bond which grace had knit between them.

At these salles, (or halls,) he meets with the fruits of his ministry, and is gladdened in spirit as they come and tell him of the manner in which

they had found their way to the true Cross.

At one he finds a liberated communist, who had learned to read in prison, having been taught by a fellow-prisoner, a free-thinker. To read and love his Bible had been the result of his imprisonment.

At another he finds an intelligent ouvrier (workman) studying his Bible. "I have read," said he to Mr. Dodds, "much in the gospels, and find that there only is to be found the knowledge of the Saviour's love."

At another station he comes upon a whole family eagerly listening to the gospel, waiting at the close of the meeting for conversation, and on their return home gathering their neighbours together to sing the gospel hymns. The mother has become a decided Christian. Thus the work goes on, finding its silent way into families.

At another station, he learns from one of the workers the simple story of a girl, who found one of the invitation papers crumpled up at the bottom of a waste-basket. She came to the meeting; and there she found her way to the Saviour of the lost.

He rests from his labours now; but his works follow him. His marble monument stands in the Passy cemetery, erected by the grateful and loving contributions of those among whom he had laboured. A thousand of the poor ouvriers had subscribed to rear it; and there it stands. Many have read it and wept over it. Many more will do the same. It is a spot worth visiting.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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THE MISSIONARY OF KILMANY.



See page 3.

"It was in the spring of 1812, when the preacher's text was John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Two young men heard that sermon, the one the son of a farmer in the parish, the other the son of one of the villagers. They met as the congregation dispersed. 'Did you feel anything particular in church to-day?' said Alexander Paterson to his acquaintance Robert Edie, as they found themselves alone upon the road. 'I never,' he continued, 'felt myself to be a lost sinner till to-day, when I was listening to that sermon.' 'It is very strange,' said his companion, 'it was just the same with me.'

They were near a plantation, into which they had wandered as the conversation proceeded. Hidden at last from all human sight, it was proposed that they should join in prayer. Both dated their conversion from that day."

The preacher was Thomas Chalmers. The two converts were the first-fruits of his ministry. "From that moment," was the remark of Dr. Chalmers long afterward, "it emphatically may be said of him, that he 'did what he could;' his labours have been more blessed than those of any man I know."

Alexander Paterson was born at Kilmany, Fifeshire, in 1790. His education was of the most limited kind, extending over one or two months during a few of the winters of his early childhood. As he grew up into boyhood, he was employed as a herd on the farm of Mr. Edie, the father of that Robert Edie who by and by was to become his bosom-friend. Naturally of a bland and kindly temperament, the genial nature which thus early manifested itself was to open to him, in after years, many a door to the hearts of the abandoned and the forlorn.

Dr. Chalmers had now become a new man, and the man had become a new preacher. "May I give," is his entry on a Sabbath evening a fortnight afterwards, "my most strenuous efforts to the great work of preparing a people for eternity."

Two anxious inquirers were often at the manse that winter. The same stirring ministrations which touched the conscience of Alexander Paterson had come home to the heart of Robert Edie. Not unfrequently, the conversation became so engrossing, that they did not leave the manse till two o'clock in the morning.

Like their teacher a year before, the two inquirers found peace in believing. An entry in Dr. Chalmers's journal seems to indicate the break-

ing forth of the sunshine,—"*Sunday, March 1.* Alexander Paterson, who called on me yesterday, called on me to-night also. He tells me that he has obtained more comfort."

After the two converts had been at the communion, Alexander writes: "I hope, my dear Robert, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. We have enlisted ourselves to be his faithful soldiers, to fight under him; and he will be a faithful Captain. May we live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for our sins, but is risen again. For we must be Christians, not in word only, but in deed also."

"Whilst at Cruvie, living in the bothy," is the testimony of one who had access to know accurately the details of this period of his life, "he first began his assaults upon the kingdom of Satan. One of the men was very fond of ballads, collecting them in great numbers, and spending his evenings in committing them to memory, that he might sing them at the plough. One morning the ballad-singer awoke, asked him why he had not roused him, what he was doing, and if he would not read aloud. With great solemnity and pathos he read a passage from the Word. The arrow entered at 'the joints of the harness.' The man was wounded. From that time a change was observed in him. He burned all his ballads, and in their stead he began to commit to memory the Psalms, and to sing them. The ballad-singer of the 'bothy' had been touched by the same grace; and his 'new heart' uttered its praises in holy strains."

In 1827 Alexander Paterson entered on a new field of life. Recommended by Dr. Chalmers, he removed from Fife, to engage, through the kindness of a Christian lady, in missionary work among the poor in the lower part of the Canongate of Edinburgh, at that time one of the most ungodly and neglected parts of the city. "This is a wonderful field," he writes in 1828, "in which the Lord has cast my lot. Amidst all the gospel light that is now shining, thousands are walking in darkness, and dying as they live."

It was soon manifest that the Lord had now brought him to the work for which he had all along been preparing him.

His daily labours at this time were such as would appear scarcely credible. He began at ten in the morning, and often continued, without an hour's interval, till eight at night, often returning home in a state of great exhaustion.

Labouring in faith and love, the missionary's path was like the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Many "Monthly Visitors" might be filled with the simple narration of cases in which, under his calm and affectionate teaching, sinners were brought from darkness to light.

"I went home from the meeting that night," said a man to him one day, "but I slept none: oh, it was a wonderful night to me!" It was a poor drunkard, who used to be the sport of the boys in the street. From that night he was a new man. So great was the change that it was visible to the whole neighbourhood. "All things had become new."

"He died with joy unspeakable. Often on his deathbed he might be heard saying, 'Oh! what grace can do! Here am I, a brand plucked out of the burning. Here am I, one who was the very chief of sinners, become a saint through Christ; and yet the least of all saints—by the grace of God I am what I am. You' (addressing Mr. Paterson) 'have been the means, in the hands of the Lord, of my salvation. Oh what a Saviour I have found! Oh what a sinner he has saved!'"

After an illness in 1830, he arose from his sickbed with freshened zeal. Unwearied in well-doing, he went on in faith and prayer. We note two other cases of conversion, one in 1835:

A woman and her husband came together one night to his meeting. His text was, "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The woman was brought under great concern.

"I felt myself," she afterwards told him, "a lost and undone sinner; and I thought there was no help for me." The husband went away from the meeting in a great rage, and never again returned whilst his wife lived. The woman was never absent. One night the missionary spoke on these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The light broke in upon her soul. She saw that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. She believed, and she found peace. She lived, after this, for five years, a marked trophy of free grace. Her deathbed was a scene of calm triumph. Taking the missionary very earnestly by the hand, she said, "Oh, pray much for my dear husband; after I am away, be sure to visit him; it may be the Lord will yet turn his heart."

The request was not forgotten. Once every week Mr. Paterson visited him, but for a long while without any apparent result. At length, one day, as he went in, he found him with the Bible before him, and the tears trickling down. "John, what's the matter?" said he, after a pause. "Oh," was the reply, "last night was the most awful night that ever I had in my life." "How?" "D'ye mind me coming one night with my wife to your meeting in Bull's Close?" "Yes, I do; but you never returned." "No, I did not; and that night, if I had had you at the door, I would have knocked you down, for you made me to be such a sinner, that I was enraged at you. D'ye mind the words you spoke upon that night? Your text," he went on to say, without waiting for a reply, and in a tone betokening the intensest agony, "your text came into my mind last night in my sleep, and I thought I heard you speaking to me. I saw myself to be the scarlet and crimson-dyed sinner—the very sinner you represented me; and I thought you pointed at me. Oh! my very heart is broken within me. Oh! what will become of me if I die in this awful state?" "Remember," said the missionary, "the words, 'Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' How long is it since you heard me upon these words?" "It's now seven years." "Well, John, you see who it is that says, Come now. It is the Lord. He said seven years ago, Come now,—and you would not come. And the Lord has come to you this last night and spoken himself to you; and he says that now, even now, if you be willing, at this very moment, he will do to you even as he hath said. Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "This man," writes Mr. Paterson,

"fled that very day into the refuge. The change was visible to all the neighbours. He lived for three years, and when he died, it was in the faith of the Lord Jesus. From being a proud sinner, he had become like a little child."

Instant in season and out of season reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine, he ceased not, by the word, by prayer, and by kindness, to do good to all as he had opportunity. By personal conversation, by his meetings, by tracts, by private letters, and by all means in his power, he sought to bring souls to Christ.

But the day was now far spent, and the time drew near when he must die. On the night of the 9th September 1849, about nine o'clock, he went, already worn out with the work of the day, to see a young man ill of *cholera*, and who died next morning. Mr. Paterson was seized with the fearful disease, and was brought very low. Contrary to all expectation, he was raised up again.

At last, in the middle of December 1851, whilst visiting, in a wretched hovel, a case of typhus fever, he caught the disease by which he was to be taken to his heavenly home.

When he first lay down, he said to his wife, "This is death; if I should be delirious, and be led to say anything which might make you doubt about my state, never mind, it's all settled with me long ago. I know whom I have believed."

After arranging a few matters, he said, with admirable sweetness, "I am not tired of life, I have enjoyed life more than most men; I liked my work, and I liked my home. But the will of the Lord be done."

His sufferings were great, but not the slightest symptom of impatience was observed. Once and again, in a low whisper, such expressions as these were uttered:—

"O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." "Perfect peace!" "O death! where is thy sting?" "Who shall deliver me?" "Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ."

He expired on 29th December 1851.

"Live," said the late Mr. McCheyne, "so as to be missed when you die." In the district, the tidings of the death of their beloved missionary fell upon the families as if it had been the death of a father. At his funeral many of the poor people were seen weeping like children.

"I shall mourn for him while I live," said one of them, an elderly female, who had been brought to the Lord under his ministrations.

"His very dust is dear to me," sobbed another, as the body was borne away.

"He was a father to me," said a third; "for sixteen years I told him all that troubled me. I've had many, many trials, and in them all he counselled me and cared for me like a parent."

Six months afterwards we visited the district; in family after family, no sooner was the name "Mr. Paterson" mentioned, than the tear started into the eye, as if the bereavement had occurred but yesterday.

The missionary's epitaph was already written. "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ," the whole scene seemed to say to us, "yet have ye not many fathers."

Following in his footsteps, his eldest son was for many years a useful city missionary in Edinburgh. His second son, Dr. David Paterson, after labouring for thirteen years as the first medical missionary in India, returned in broken health in 1870. He was suddenly taken away on the 14th February 1871.

Reader! be ye a follower of Alexander Paterson, even as he also was of Christ.

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NOVEMBER 1886.

"ARE THERE FEW?"

Lord, are there few that be saved?—(LUKE XIII. 23.)



See page 3.

WE should all have liked to have had the opportunity of listening to the Saviour's conversations with individuals and groups of people, in his journeyings. At this time he was on his way to Jerusalem. Passing through "cities and villages," he everywhere attracted attention by his very presence; for as "never man spake like this man," so also never man looked as he. His "teaching" was "with authority."

On this occasion some of his hearers put to him a curious but very natural

question, "Lord, *are there few that be saved?*" Nor was the Lord displeased, though he had his own way of dealing with it. He did really answer it in course of the conversation, (see ver. 29 ;) but first he put it in its proper place as a question, natural enough in itself, but not one of much importance to an earnest disciple. Our prophet Jesus would teach us some memorable lessons:—

1. *Curious questions should be left over till the great question is settled.* Of what use would it be to know whether *few* or *many* are to be saved? Would it help us to understand better the way of salvation? Would it clear away any difficulty as to the terms of acceptance? Would it not rather divert our mind from the one all-important inquiry, "May I, a sinner, enter in at that open door?"

Salvation is represented under the figure of entering into a mansion by the open door. God the Father is there, with every blessing that can satisfy, stored up for us in the rooms of that mansion; while Christ the Saviour not only stands at the door, on the very threshold, to receive whoever comes, but is *himself the door*. Accept his offered hand stretched out to draw you in; this is the first and the all-important matter. What although hundreds do not make up their minds to enter this mansion of peace? let them trifle away their opportunity if they will, but come you yourself in.

John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, has finely pictured the mansion, and the open door. The Pilgrim saw a palace, every way desirable: joy, and peace, and rest were there. On its roof walked in white a glorious company, who were never weary singing praise to Him who had brought them in, and who looked out with most kindly interest on those without. They saw one intensely desirous to get in, and the door stood open; but between him

and that open door were many foes, who determined to intercept his approach, and these opponents were strong as well as many. How difficult it seemed to him to find his way through that host, and enter in to the mansion. How "*strait*" the gate seemed! not in itself, but by reason of all the hindrances interposed. But he had felt that he *must be saved*, and he had heard that he must "*strive to enter in*;" and so he drew his sword, ("the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*,") and pressed forward. Right and left he struck at his foes with that sword, and forced them to give way. The words of God were irresistible; and soon he stood at the open door, and bounded over the threshold, while voices from above sung his welcome,—

"Come in, come in!
Eternal glory thou shalt win."

Have you thus settled the great question of your personal salvation? No matter what others may do, have *you* gone forward? Have *you* firmly opposed God's truth to all that Satan suggested to hinder you? Have you taken the sword of the word, and so cut your way through hosts of discouragements? Did you find that *Christ himself*, Christ who died and rose again, Christ crucified, was the Door? the Gate of the glorious mansion? There may seem to be "*few*" who thus press in, but certain it is that all get in who do so press on.

2. *Terrible disappointments will occur outside of that gate.* Many liked the mansion in a general way, and lingered near it. But there were many things that made the gate seem "*strait*." They did not relish the call to *immediate* decision; that was one of the things that made the gate seem "*strait*." There were very many attractions outside, and very much lawful business that solicited present atten-

tion, inclining them to postpone their going up to the gate. They meant, however, to do so some time—probably soon. They were sure they would be found within the mansion at last, though as yet they did not make much effort to get over fancied difficulties; for they were ashamed before men to be seen very anxious about the salvation of their souls. But suddenly they heard voices on every side exclaiming, "*The Master has risen up, and shut to the door!*" and they are still outside.

Who can picture their dismay! They always meant to be in; and it is now too late! "They seek to enter in" in right earnest now. They knock loud at the shut door. They cry most mournfully, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But the Master declares, "Ye are no friends of mine; I know you not." They try remonstrances: "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,"—that is, we have treated thee not as an enemy but as a friend; and "thou hast taught in our streets,"—we took thy side when thou wert teaching among us; we spoke favourably of thee. Lord, Lord, surely we are shut out by mistake! Lord, Lord, open to us! Now, all this is true. They so far took Christ's side; they did not oppose him; nay, they did many things in his favour. But all this was only coming within sight of the mansion, and the open door; looking at it; talking about it; pointing it out, it may be, to others also.

O reader, listen! it is not a few only, but "*many*" who shall meet with this tremendous disappointment. The Master says so, verse 24th; and how peremptory is his rejection of them! Listen: "*I tell you that I know you not!*"—you need knock no longer. "*I tell you you are no friends of mine!*" The very fact of your coming so far, but not coming in, was a testimony against me; for you thereby said that you had come

near enough to see if it was worth your while to go at any risk, and you decided that it was *not*. "*Depart from me!*" I will have nothing to do with you. I will never invite you again. Begone from my sight, "*ye workers of iniquity.*" For so you are, in spite of fair appearances: never coming to get pardon, and the Holy Spirit, and thus remaining under guilt and corruption; and giving forth to the world an evil report concerning me.

3. *The awful sight that will call forth weeping and gnashing of teeth.* While thus on the outside of the glorious mansion, with the terrible words of the Master of the house still ringing in their ears, lo! yonder glorious sight, surpassingly glorious! There is *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.* Behold the beauty and brightness of their mansion! Oh, it was worth all toil, all pain, all fighting, the loss of all things, to get in at that gate, and be there for ever and ever.

They who are outside get a glimpse of it all, but "*they themselves are thrust out.*" What an indescribable aggravation of their tremendous disappointment there is in this very sight! For they have no share in that bliss, and they never can have. No wonder, then, that there is *weeping*; no wonder there is "*gnashing of teeth*,"—bitterest remorse and self-upbraiding,—as they reproach themselves with their own ruin.

The traveller in Greece, carried prisoner by brigands up mountains from which his eye could gaze on the rarest and richest scenery, under an atmosphere all clearness and purity, found himself indescribably miserable. That glorious landscape was spread before him, while death because of an unpaid ransom was every moment approaching. In his journal he tells that thus to gaze was aggravated anguish—the essence of wretchedness,—all the more bitter

because he was there in face of warning given, but unheeded and neglected.

But this is not all ; for see, it is *not* a few that are saved. See ! they are coming *from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south !* a great multitude that no man can number. And there is room for all in that mansion. Not one that came in at the gate was unwelcome ; they all "*sit down in the kingdom of God,*" side by side with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets. You cannot say that you are outside because there was no room for you. See, they have come by thousands, and by tens of thousands, and not one was refused. You need not allege your special difficulties, for you will find, in that great multitude, the story of trials and temptations, far, far more formidable than yours. You might have been among that redeemed multitude, had it not been for your spiritual *indolence*, nay, your *half-hearted* profession of attachment to the Saviour ! By these you were deceived ; and now nought remains but "weeping, and gnashing of teeth."

Some of Christ's words are very terrible. Are not these words beyond measure terrible ? And in Matt. vii. 22 he says that **MANY** shall be thus outside ; "*many* shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name," (been teachers of others, old and young ;) "and in thy name have cast out devils," (been the instruments of reclaiming many from vice, casting out the devils of drunkenness

and lust ;) "and in thy name done many wonderful works ?"—all by using "his name ;" all by commending him, and so far speaking well of him and his salvation. And yet these never *fully accepted Christ* as their substitute, their Lord, all their salvation, and all their desire. And so, "I will then profess unto them, I never knew you ! Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

There is a Saviour for you, even for you, but, you must receive him *now*, for "behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

"O depth of mercy, can it be
That gate was left ajar for me ?"

"That gate ajar stands free to all
Who seek through it salvation ;
The rich and poor, the great and small,
Of every tribe and nation."

And no sooner shall you have safely crossed the threshold of the blessed mansion, "than you find yourself in communion with the Master of the house," who had long waited for you, and sent you many a gracious message, and many a token of his love. You will know what it is to speak with him from day to day, and what it is for him to pour out his heart to you in his word. He knows his sheep, and they know the shepherd. (John x. 14.) Never will he say to one of *them*, "I never knew you." Blessed now, and blessed for evermore, is the man who thus "acquaints himself with God." (Job xxii. 21.)

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"WITHOUT CHRIST."



READER! are you willing, at the closing of another year, to listen for a quarter of an hour to a few kindly-meant words as to the state of your soul? You are ready, perhaps, to ask, "What right have you to judge me?" Dear friend, far be it from us to judge you, but we affectionately

plead with you to judge yourself. Suffer us to remind you that you have a deeper stake in the matter than we have, and that the day is at hand when you will be able to put it off no longer.

Dear reader, *What is your hope?* And what is God's testimony con-

See page 3.

cerning a soul "without Christ"? It is to be found in many places in the Bible; specially in John iii. 36: "*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God ABIDETH on him.*"

He does not believe in Christ. "He believeth not the Son." To be a believer is to be in Christ. To be an unbeliever is to be out of Christ.

Here is Paul's description: "Without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world," or, as the word may be rendered, "*atheists in the world.*" (Eph. ii. 12.) Can any worse thing be said of a devil? Yet such is your state, O Christless soul. All the sin of your nature—the sins of childhood and youth—your resisting of convictions—your grieving of the Spirit—the secret besetting sin that has been gnawing at your heart—the one leak by which you may have been filling up the measure of your iniquity, when perhaps almost every other had been stopped—these are all lying on your soul, not one of them forgiven. What a treasure of sin, what a treasure of wrath! Every day, every hour, your soul has been dyed anew in iniquity, till now it is red as deepest crimson.

And there is no other relief; no other hope. Your soul is sick. Christ is held out as the balm. But *you* have no balm, for you are *without Christ*. (Jeremiah viii. 22.)

Your soul is *hungry*. Christ is held out as the bread of life. But *you* have no bread, for you are *without Christ*. (John vi. 51.)

Your soul is *thirsty*. Christ is held out as the water: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." You are thirsty, but *you* have no water, for you are *without Christ*. (John vii. 37.)

Your soul is *dark*. Christ is held out as the *light*, but you stumble on in darkness and terror. *You* have no light, for you are *without Christ*. (John xii. 46.)

Your soul is *dead*. Christ is held out as the *life*: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." But *you* have no life; you are without feeling, without warmth, without life, for you are *without Christ*. (John xi. 25.)

Your soul is *weary, weary*. Christ is held out to you as the *rest*: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." But you are weary, and there is no rest for your soul, for you are *without Christ*. (Matt. xi. 28.)

Fellow-sinner, hide it from yourself as you may, is it not plain that, dying as you are, you shall never see life? Can you look at these texts, and, feeling you are Christless, venture yet to say that your sins are forgiven you? Let that sad sentence haunt you. When you awake at midnight, let those words of fire glare upon you, like the handwriting on the wall, "**WITHOUT CHRIST!**"

Or do you know that you have not Christ, and do you yet dream about *hope*? Is it not all a delusion? You speak of allowances to be made, of your disadvantages, your want of opportunities, your good intentions. Are not these just attempts to put the blame on others, shifts by which you think you can keep God off a little longer? You speak of Christ's blood. Yes, but it is not upon *you*. You wish to talk about *hope*, but it is only in your own way. You do not wish to be pressed to examine it closely—to test it by the Bible, for you know it will not bear it. Is it not the case that you "*shall not see life*," and that you are walking in darkness?

"*The wrath of God ABIDETH on him.*"

That wrath is a *real* thing. So long as a sinner is dead in sins, he may hear about it, read about it, write about it, think about it,—may in a sense believe it, as a doctrine about *sinners*,—but he does not believe it as a present reality about *himself*. But when his eyes are

opened, he sees it to be a present and terrible reality; more present, more real, than any of the troubles of the world. It drinks up his thoughts, and fills his heart with heaviness. Reader! have you felt this?

It is a *certain* thing. Sinners say they will *take their chance*. Ah! it is no chance. As surely as Christ died for sin, and as surely as there is *no* wrath on the believer, so surely is there *wrath on the unbeliever*,—for the wages of sin is death.

It is a *present* thing. There is an interval between sin and its sentence among men, because of uncertainty as to guilt, till the proof be found and brought home; but there is no uncertainty, no delay in the condemnation, with God. If I am under sin, I am *under wrath*—condemned already, though the execution lingers for a little, that space may be given for repentance.

The *wrath abideth*. Fearful word, fearful truth. Well may it haunt the Christless soul. A companion troubles you—torments you. You can get relief by fleeing from his company. But, unless by fleeing to Christ, you cannot flee from wrath. Believe it or no, think of it or no, forget it or no, it *abideth* on you. O sinner out of Christ, you may go away from your home and forget a book or a cloak behind you, but you cannot go without the wrath. It cleaves to you wherever you go. If it were written on your brow, you could wash it out;—but no, it is written *within*—on your soul, on your conscience. It rests on you now. Your neighbour may not know it, your minister may not know it, but God knows it. Do *you* know it?

Perhaps you flee from those who faithfully warn you. You forsake a ministry, or a Sabbath school, but wrath follows you. You go home—but it goeth where you go. You seek your chamber—it is there.

You lie down to sleep—it abideth upon you. *It* does not sleep. You awake in the morning—*it* is waking, watching. You go to your employment—it abides upon you. You go this week to a gay party;—the merry laugh is there, you try to look happy, but the wrath is upon you still. They wish you a happy birthday, or a happy new year. But there is no happy new year for you.

And again, if out of Christ, your heart has never been changed. Christ, the physician, lays his hand on your soul, as he did to Nicodemus. He tells you all is wrong. You say you are well, but he says you are dying,—that you are carnally minded,—and to be carnally minded is *death*. He tells you, Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God, (John iii. 3;) that you are still walking “according to the course of this world.”

Two hundred years ago there was a fearful time in London. The plague was raging. The grass grew in the silent streets. On the door of each stricken house was marked a red cross, and the words, “Lord have mercy upon us!” A heavy sound is heard,—the dull rumble of wheels. A cart is passing—a bell is heard—and the dreadful cry in front of the house, “Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!” O reader, out of Christ, the plague is upon you,—death is upon you,—*wrath* is upon you. Has not God’s broken law a right to your soul? Is it not waiting for you? Is it not crying at your door, “Bring out that sinner! bring out that sinner! bring out that sinner? He is out of Christ, he has spent another year dead in sins,—prepared for the devil and his angels! He is prepared now! Bring out the sinner!” Will you not, as it were, hear that cry to-night under your window, when you lie down to sleep,—with *the wrath of God abiding on you?*

But oh, how blessed, that from all this guilt and misery there is a *real, certain, present* way of deliverance. "He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) And what is believing, what is faith in Jesus Christ? "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we *receive* and *rest upon him* ALONE for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."

And how is Christ offered to me in the gospel? I am a sinner, and the wages of my sin is death. A broken law requires my death: unless I can meet that law with a full atonement and a perfect righteousness, I must be cast into hell. God gave his dear Son, to be made a curse instead of accursed sinners. Christ, in his blood and righteousness, all he *is*, and all he *has done*, is offered to me *now*, "*for nothing*," for my salvation. Is this really true? If it be really salvation I am seeking, shall I not thankfully, joyfully believe it? I let go all else—my bad works, my good works—my bad thoughts, my good thoughts—my bad feelings, my good feelings—I let go ALL, and cast myself upon Christ, as a poor sinner, who, but for him, would not have a shadow of hope, for time or for eternity. If I thus, by the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, believe on the Son, I *have* everlasting life. Like the thief on the cross—like the Ethiopian eunuch—like Saul of Tarsus—like the Philippian jailor—I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, thus by faith united to him, a *lost man* becomes a *saved man*. And now I begin to understand the

wondrous power of that word, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is not that I begin a new life, which peradventure may end in deserving salvation; but if I have Christ, I am warranted to rejoice in a salvation *already finished by Christ*, and *accepted by the Father*, provided, not for him who tries to work for it, but who *believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*. (Romans iv. 5.) I rejoice that "this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John v. 11.)

Dear reader, is this your happy life? If not, why not? Is it in the Bible, or is it *in yourself*, that you find the reason why Christ is not yours? Do you say you are seeking? Well,—but *what*,—*where*,—*how*,—are you seeking? If you be truly in earnest, there are only two causes which can be really hindering,—either, *there is some sin which you are not willing to give up*,—or, you have a defective view as to the fulness and freeness of Christ's salvation. Remember, you have not to seek a *right* to come to Christ. That is yours already, whether you avail yourself of it or no. God's free love has given Christ to be for salvation to every sinner on earth willing to receive him. Think *who Christ is*, and *what Christ has done*,—and that to-day He says to you, "Come unto me,—and I will give you rest." (Matthew xi. 28.)

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THE SHADOWS AND THE DAY-BREAK.



"THE flight of shadows, and the eternal day-break." Such was the title of a sermon preached about 200 years ago by a Scottish minister, Thomas Halyburton, professor of divinity at St. Andrews. His tombstone stands close by that of Samuel Rutherford. That title may

most suitably form a New Year's motto, and provide us with a New Year's message. The shadows are fleeing, and the day is preparing to break. This year on which we are entering will be to millions both an *ending* and a *beginning*,—the ending of time, and the beginning of eternity.

It concerns us to know how that ending and that beginning will affect us, and to have *the great question between us and God finally and for ever settled* before we cross the threshold. The question of everlasting friendship with God, and the prospect of eternal joy or eternal sorrow, are matters which demand our most immediate and urgent thought. How will the flight of shadows affect my endless history? and will the eternal day-break, when the great Judge shall appear, be a welcome realization of hoped-for joy, or a most woful disappointment, ushering me into the blackness of darkness for ever?

Twice in the history of every believing man or woman are these words fulfilled. Once, when first he leaves behind him the darkness in which he was born, and enters into fellowship with the Son of God. Again, when he passes into the heavenly glory. Then, in the brightest and fullest sense, the day-break bursts upon his view; and that will be to him the fairest and gladdest New Year on which he has ever entered.

The great question, then, for New Year's day to each reader is, Has there been any fulfilment of the first of these in my past history, and have I the sure and certain hope that the second is in store for me? What is the entrance on a New Year to one still compassed about with the shadows of unpardoned guilt, and still looking into a dark future without a day-break.

Yet at the gate of the New Year there stands one proclaiming, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." (John viii. 12.) Where HE is, no shadows come; and in him we have the earnest of the blessed day-break, which casts before it upon each believing man the streaks of coming glory. "Look unto me, and be enlightened," is his message to a dark

world, and each opening year enforces that message more earnestly. Look, then, and be enlightened! Enter not upon a New Year with the shadow still compassing thee about.

This Thomas Halyburton to whom we have referred had a long death-bed; and on that death-bed he lay in calmness waiting for the summons to depart. Many were the words he spoke during that interval. Among these there was one which showed the state of mind in which he was, thus lying on the edge of eternity. It ought to come home to us:—"Blessed be the day that I was born!" he exclaimed one day; and then he added, "*I have a father and mother in heaven; ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I am the eleventh;—blessed be the day that I was born.*" In that exclamation there is contained the hope, sure and steadfast, of the Christian man,—a hope that maketh not ashamed. There is in it a looking back, and a looking forward; and in both there is blessedness. Many a one has said when dying, "Would that I had never been born;" and millions throughout a sorrowful eternity will say the same,—not once, nor twice, but times without number, "Would that I had never been born! Would that these eyes had never seen the light!" Sad, sad indeed beyond measure, the man who can only curse the day when he was born! Happy the man who, as he looks into the long futurity of his undying soul, can truly be glad that he was born. What a bright inscription to be written upon the doorposts and lintel of the New Year,—

"BLESSED BE THE DAY THAT I
WAS BORN."

They read like the words of old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." (Luke ii. 29.) If any of our readers should visit the churchyard of St. Andrews

Cathedral, let them go to Halyburton's tombstone, and think upon his dying words. He has been well nigh 200 years in heaven, and he knows the full meaning now of what he said on earth; and each New Year in the Kingdom, where he now is, will increase his gladness as he looks back upon the tribulation through which he has passed, and anticipates the endless glory of which he is the heir.

But there is another inscription which flashes its awful light upon the threshold of the New Year,—

"EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD." (John iii. 3.)

Reader, has that text ever met your eye, and fixed it? It contains the words of Him who cannot lie. It proclaims the law of the Kingdom, which admits of no change. It is irreversible, and admits of no exceptions. We may call our age the day of light and culture, in which so great a change is not required; but there stand the words of Him who is the faithful and true witness, inscribed for all ages, and for all nations,—meant for every child of Adam, learned or unlearned, cultured or uncultured,—“Ye must be born again.”

Nicodemus of old stumbled at the statement,—so brief, yet so uncompromising, and asked, “How can a man be born when he is old?” Yes, he stumbled at this stumbling-stone, as men who call themselves enlightened and devout do at the present day.

The Lord repeats the truth even more strongly; but he kindly goes on to explain it, till Nicodemus' unbelief gives way, and he asks, not in the spirit of the scorner, as at first, but in that of the inquirer, “How can these things be?” He apprehends the deep meaning of the great Teacher, and asks how he is to be made partaker of this second birth, how this change

is to take place? Immediately the Lord proceeds to answer the question, by reminding him of Israel's history, as if asking him, “How was Israel healed in the desert, when the serpents were destroying them?” and bidding him learn the great lesson thus taught by God, as to the simplicity and freeness of the change, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John iii. 14.) Israel's restoration to health came by simply *looking*; so is it still with the sinner. Not by effort of ours,—not by endeavour to raise ourselves, step by step, to a higher level,—not by tears, and fastings, and prayers, but by looking to Him who contains in himself all spiritual health. It is the simple *look* that heals; not the struggle or the waiting. It is not by processes of self-mortification, or tedious preparation, that we enter on sonship, or obtain forgiveness, or pass from darkness to light, but by trustfully turning the eye to the cross of Christ. That cross contains the medicine, and He who hangs there is the Physician. He is the Son of God, the dispenser of everlasting life; and that simple look at once connects us with him. We are healed; we have eternal life; we become sons; for it is written, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John i. 12.) Thus are we “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter i. 23.) Cowper speaks of “the soul-quickening words, *Believe and live*.” The Lord Jesus has said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John vi. 63.) The words of the

Son of God are living words; and when these words enter into our souls, they carry with them the life which is in him; and thus are we "begotten again unto a lively hope." (1 Peter i. 3.)

In looking back upon the past, reader, at this New Year, do you say, "Blessed be the day that I was born"? and do you say so because you can also say, "Blessed be the day when I was born again"? A whole eternity of joy or of sorrow hangs upon the answer to this question. It is not an unanswerable question, as some think. It *may* be answered. It *ought to be* answered; and it *demand*s an immediate and decided answer. God has provided in his gospel the full material for such an answer: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) What can be simpler or plainer? What can be less likely to puzzle or perplex an inquirer? Here is *sonship* and *believing* linked together by God himself. You cannot have the sonship without the believing, and you cannot have the believing without the sonship.

Shall a New Year pass without some decided step taken heavenward? Shall we read the inscription on its gate, and be unmoved? If the great change has passed upon us, shall there be no thanksgiving? If not, shall we move another step without the prodigal's resolution, "I will arise and go to my Father"? I know I shall be welcome. I know the Father waits with outstretched arms to embrace me, and to salute

his prodigal with the paternal kiss. I know that all things are ready for me,—the open door, the empty seat, the best robe, the fatted calf, the festal mirth, the triumphant song, "This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." Too many years have I lived as an alien, and wasted my substance as a prodigal. Too many years have I lived without sonship, without peace, without life, without hope. Let the year now closed be the last of my wandering years. I leave the far country, and the famine, and the unhappiness, behind me for ever. The hunger, and the husks, and the swine, and the slavery are all things of the past. Before me and around me, are the liberty and the love, and the plenty and the gladness. All is well: the shadows are fleeing, and the day is breaking. Blessed be the day that I was born. I must not wait. I do not need to prepare. I take my sins and cast them at once upon the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Though numerous as the sea-sands, they disappear at once,—forgotten even by God himself:—"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" Forgiveness immediate, complete, irreversible, such is my portion; not because I have waited, or prayed, or purchased, or deserved, but simply because I have believed in the name of the Son of God, taking him for what he is,—the great PROPITIATION FOR SIN.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1887.

DELAY;

OR, THE ACCEPTED TIME.



See page 3.

A YOUNG man called upon me one Sabbath evening, and as soon as we were seated, he said to me,—

“I have accepted the invitation that you have so often given from the pulpit, to any who are willing to converse with you upon the subject of religion.”

“I am glad to see you,” said I.

“I don’t know,” he replied, “that I have anything to say, such as I ought to have; but I am convinced that I have neglected religion long enough, and I am determined to put it off no longer.”

“That is a good determination,”

said I. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

"Well, I don't know that that text is for me, because"—

"Yes, it is for you," said I, interrupting him.

"I was going to say, sir, I don't suppose I have got so far as that yet, so that salvation is for me *now*."

"You *told* me that you were 'determined to put off religion no longer; and therefore I say, 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.'"

"But I don't wish to be in a hurry, sir."

"You *ought* to be in haste. David was. He says, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent; and you are one of them. And if you are like David, you will 'make haste and delay not' to keep God's commandments."

"I don't suppose I am in such a state of mind as to be prepared to become a Christian *now*."

"Will disobeying God put you in a *better* state of mind, do you think?"

"Why, I don't know; but I have not much deep conviction. I know that I am a sinner against God, and I wish to turn to him, and live a different life."

"Then turn to him. 'Now is the accepted time.'"

"But I find my heart is full of sin; I am all wrong; I feel an opposition to God such as I never felt before."

"Then repent and turn to God instantly, while it is called to-day."

"But I don't suppose I can be ready to come to religion so *quickly*?"

"You *said* you were determined to put it off no longer, and I told you, 'Now is the accepted time.'"

"But I never began to think seriously about my religion till last Sunday."

"And so you want to put it off a little longer?"

"Why, I want to get *ready*."

"And are you getting ready? You have tried it for a week."

"No, sir," said he, in a sad manner; "I don't think I am any nearer to it than I was at first."

"I don't think you are. And I suppose the reason is, that you don't believe 'now is the accepted time.'"

"Oh yes, I do; for the Bible says so."

"Then don't wait for any other time. Repent *now*. Flee to Christ *now*, in the 'accepted time.'"

"I have not conviction enough yet."

"Then it cannot be the 'accepted time' yet."

"But I have not faith enough."

"Then it cannot be 'the accepted time.'"

"Well, sir, I—I—I am not ready *now*."

"Then it cannot be the 'accepted time' *now*."

"But it seems to me it is too *quick*," said he earnestly.

"Then it cannot be 'the accepted time,' and the Bible has made a mistake."

"But, sir, my heart is not *prepared*."

"Then it is not 'the accepted time.'"

With much embarrassment in his manner, he replied,—

"What shall I do?"

"Repent and turn to God, with faith in Christ to save you as a lost unworthy sinner, *now* in 'the accepted time.'"

He appeared to be in a great strait. He sat in silence with very manifest uneasiness for a few moments, and then asked,—

"Is it possible that *any one* should repent, and give up the world, and turn to God *so soon*, when I began to think about it only last Sunday?"

"Now is the 'accepted time,'" said I.

Again he sat in thoughtful silence, and after a time he asked me,—

"Is salvation offered to sinners now?"

"Yes, now. 'Now is the day of salvation.'"

"But it seems to me I am not prepared now to give up the world."

"That very thing is your difficulty. You are not prepared; but 'now is the accepted time.' You wish to put off your repentance and conversion to Christ till some other time; but 'now is the accepted time.' You and your Bible disagree. And if nothing else kept you from salvation, this would be enough. I beseech you, my dear friend, delay no longer. Now is God's time. 'Deny yourself, and take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ.' You told me you were determined to put off religion no longer. I suspected you did not know your own heart, and therefore said to you, 'Now is the accepted time.' And now it has become manifest that you mean to put off religion till some other time all the while."

"It seems hard to shut up a man just to the present time," said he, in an imploring accent.

"If you were a dying man, and had only an hour to live, you would not say so. You would be glad to have the Bible say to you, 'Now is the accepted time,' instead of saying that you needed a month or a week to flee to Christ. It is *mercy* in God to say to you, 'Behold, now is the day of salvation,' when you do not know that you will live till to-morrow."

"Will you pray with me?" said he.

I prayed with him, and we separated. The last words I uttered to him as he left the door were, "Now is the accepted time."

Just one week afterwards he called upon me, "to give an account of himself," as he said.

"I have got out of my trouble," said he. "Now, I trust in Christ, and I am reconciled to God, or at least I think so. I thought you were very hard upon me last Sunday night,

when you *hammered* me, and *hammered* me with that text, 'Now is the accepted time.' But I couldn't get away from it. It followed me everywhere. I would think of one thing, and then that would come up, 'Now is the accepted time.' Then I would begin to think of something else, and it would come up again, 'Now is the accepted time.' So I went on for three days. I tried to forget that text, but I *could not*. I said to myself, 'There is something else in the Bible except that;' but wherever I read, that *would* come to my mind. It annoyed me, and *tormented* me. Finally, I began to question myself, *why it was* that this plagued me so much? And I found it was because I was *not willing to be saved by Christ*. I was trying to do something for myself, and I wanted more time. But it was not done. Everything failed me. And then I thought, if 'now is the accepted time,' I may go to Christ now, wicked as I am. So I just prayed for *mercy*, and gave up all to Him."

The idea of this young man was new to me. It had never entered my mind, that when one wants more time, it is "*because he is not willing to be saved by Christ*." I suppose that is true. A delaying sinner is a legalist. Self-righteousness delays. How little the procrastinating know about their own hearts!

Dear reader, have you ever honestly sought to discover what it is that has been keeping *you* from experiencing the peace that comes through the blood of the cross? Wishing to be like some whom you have seen or heard of, who could speak of having "peace like a river, and righteousness like the waves of the sea," have you ever come to close quarters with yourself, and pressed on yourself the question, What is it that is *hindering me*? Doubtless, the discovery, if made, would surprise many. There is the idea that it is

humility to speak of your sinfulness and unworthiness, your want of feeling, your hardness of heart, as a reason for not closing straightway with God's offer of mercy in Christ Jesus, as if it would be presumptuous and offensive to God, *at once and as you are* to enter in at the open door. In such cases, the real state of things is often this: There is an aversion to give up the world, to surrender some besetting sin, some bosom lust, to take up the cross, to come out and be separate from the careless and ungodly whom you have hitherto been associated with. This is a step that must needs be taken: without it, light and enlargement there can be none.

In the case of one who had lived a most godless life, earning a livelihood by racing, and by fighting dogs, in company with the vilest of men, when at length the Holy Spirit began to deal with him, and he earnestly asked, What must I do to be saved? the answer of the friend of whom he inquired, was, "Can you give up your dogs?" "Sell my dogs! sell my dogs! What has that to do with it?" he exclaimed. "All must be given up for Christ. Your dogs are your gods; can you part with them for salvation?" "Give up my dogs! What harm have they done? No, no; I cannot give up such good runners as they are." "Then there is no hope of mercy if we cannot give up all for Christ; we shall never find him; your case is hopeless, except you give up your dogs." The dogs were parted with, and *then* the way was

opened up, and his bands were loosed. "Thou wast a God that forgavest *them*, though Thou tookest vengeance of *their inventions*." That is a case most common, and it were well for anxious inquirers to consider whether it may not be some such hindrance as this that stands in their way.

With others, pride and self-righteousness bar the door. They will not look at that great Scripture word, **FREELY**, which is just another expression for **BY GRACE**; and trying to do something for themselves, to *fit* themselves for being saved, they defer from day to day. Many reasons may be assigned for the delay, but the truth is, as that young man put it, the unbelieving heart is *not willing to be saved by Christ*; in other words, it rejects the gospel plan, the one way of salvation. Reader, is not this your case? There is but one word that suits you, that cannot be too often repeated or too earnestly pressed home upon you: "The Holy Ghost saith, **TO-DAY!** Behold, *now* is the accepted time!"

—Rev. Dr. I. S. Spencer.

"Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands:
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and *thou alone!*

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Vile, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!"

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A SABBATH WELL SPENT.

BY THE LATE DR. JAMES HAMILTON, LONDON.



THERE is danger in Sabbath-desecration. "Near a beautiful village in the State of New York," writes an excellent minister of our acquaintance, "there lived a farmer of wealth and respectability, but he was a sceptic. Whether he had been religiously trained we know not ; but in the early part of his life he had been a regular attendant on the ordinances of the Sabbath. His health was remarkably robust, and had been all his life, being now about fifty years of age. You would have selected him among a thousand as the longest-lived, according to appearance. It was a clear and

cloudless Sabbath morning when the farmer set out to gather his hay. He had a long bridge to pass before he reached his fields. The gate-keeper gently reminded him of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath, and of the great guilt of thus labouring on the Lord's day. He tossed his head, and replied that he had not been to church for sixteen years, and that he paid the workmen twelve cents extra for what they did on the Sunday. He was reminded that life is uncertain. 'Why,' he replied, 'I am such a knot of hardy health, Death himself has not an arrow which can pierce me.' During the afternoon, however, the skies began to darken, and a summer shower seemed rising to water the earth. The farmer, with all his hands, strained every nerve to finish their work and secure the hay. He was labouring with all his energy in building a stack, when a sudden flash was seen; the bolt descended, and all was over. There lay the Sabbath-breaker—dead, and his sins sealed up to judgment. I saw his funeral slowly winding along the borders of the beautiful meadows which yesterday he owned, and I wondered if his spirit thought it wise *then* to violate God's law."

There is danger in Sabbath-breaking. The Sabbath is sacred, and to desecrate it is to dishonour Him who claims it as his own. Sins against society God leaves it to society to punish, and therefore it is seldom that the hand of omnipotence strikes dead in the very act the thief or the murderer; but sins directly against Heaven's majesty are from time to time visited at the moment, that a salutary fear may fall upon transgressors. Not always—for that would put an end to human liberty; but often enough to inspire with a certain awe human temerity. An Achan, an Ananias, practically defies the divine omniscience; that omniscience vindicates itself in his destruc-

tion. A Korah rebels at the divine sovereignty, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows the rebel. Uzzah handles the sacred ark as if it were a common chest, and the Lord smites him and he dies. Multitudes may have perpetrated similar offences with impunity; but these and similar examples occur, ever and anon, that sinners may fear and forbear. So it is no superstitious sentiment we try to awaken; but, knowing the frequency of instances akin to the one now quoted, it is to the reverential instincts and sober reason of every one who is tempted to desecrate God's day, that we appeal in saying, Take care. This desecration is very dangerous. The day belongs to God, and if you assail it, he may avenge it in *your* person. Take care that you be not the Uzzah of this ark, the Korah of this controversy. Take care that it be not recorded in your epitaph, that in the upsetting of that pleasure-boat, or the collision of that excursion train, you were the hapless victim of Sabbath profanation.

But if sentence against an evil work is seldom executed thus speedily, the danger is none the less; for there are greater calamities than sudden and untimely death. The man who, fleeing from his creditors, flings himself into the nearest ship, may escape without paying his debts; but if it turns out that fever is raging on board, and he catches the deadly contagion; or if the vessel proves to be a pirate, and the adventure ends in his being sold to life-long slavery; he has no reason to boast of his luck or his agility. And just so it would have been well for many a Sabbath-breaker, if, in his first daring act of transgression, the stroke of vengeance had laid him low; for then he would have died comparatively innocent. But sentence was not executed speedily, and so his heart was fully set in him to do evil. Beginning with absence from the sanctuary, per-

haps, he was introduced to idle or dissolute acquaintances, and was gradually drawn on to drink, to bet and gamble, to live beyond his income, to live by dishonest means, or on borrowed money—till now, perhaps dismissed from his employment, at least disliking his stricter and more virtuous friends, with a conscience deadened, an imagination polluted, a heart corrupted, he is manifold more the child of hell than at the outset of his ungodly career.

But if there is danger in Sabbath desecration, there is great delight in Sabbath-keeping.

Here is a boundary wall, high, dark, and solid, with a row of spikes running round the coping; and every here and there is set up a "Warning to Trespassers." But yonder is a stately gateway, with a handsome lodge; and, under escort of some member of the family, you enter, and by the shady avenue with its gravelled path and turfy border, you pass to the splendid mansion. You are now a member of the family; there is no fear that you will wantonly deface or damage anything; and the lord of the manor says, "All things are yours. Make yourself at home. Walk at liberty."

Something like this are God's inclosures in our world. The Christian church appears blank and uninviting to spectators from without, or it actually frowns and looks formidable. Worldly men observe the outside wall, built up of texts and tenets, and fretted at the top with warnings and threatenings, and to them it looks exceedingly dull and dreary. But when through the door of faith you really get within, what a delightful discovery! A propitious God, a peaceful conscience, the society of the saints, the hope full of immortality, all the holy and happy emotions which the blessed Comforter inspires—a perfect paradise restored. Introduced by the Heir himself, you are

welcomed by the Lord of the land: "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's. Yours is the kingdom. Eat and be satisfied. Inherit the earth."

So, too, with the Sabbath. It is also a sacred inclosure; and although there is an impression among the more respectable passers-by that it is a good and useful institution, there is a very common prejudice against it. Knowing only the outside of it, many speak of it as dull, puritanical, gloomy; and when they come to the notices here and there erected, with the royal arms above and the "caution to trespassers" beneath, a certain resentful or impatient feeling rises in their minds. But when a mind comes to be right with God, it sees that there is no way so good as God's own way,—no plan for the creature so wise as to fall in with the Creator's prescription; and this commandment, if a righteous requirement on the part of the great Governor, it also recognises as "holy" and "good" for the governed. Brought within the precincts, blessed with that inward peace and that complacency in God which are themselves sabbatic, the institution begins to wear the aspect of a privilege and a boon. Congenial with the new nature, and relieved from pains and penalties, its sanctity is safe in the guardianship of filial piety. To such it is a "delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable."

Yes, the Sabbath is the day for special devotion. Take time to pray, and, in order that prayer may not be a task, think of some topics: think of last week with its sins, its mercies, its prospered engagements, its seasonable supplies; and think of the one now begun, with its duties, its wants, its temptations, its dangers, and in the name of the Great Intercessor ask help for the time of need. Think of your acquaintances, your relations, your fellow-worshippers, your suffering neighbours,—those friends who have asked for your prayers. Think of Christ's kingdom, and pray that

it may come in this country, over the Continent, throughout the world.

As the basis of self-culture, seek self-knowledge. Do I love the Lord Jesus? Is the gospel a reality to me? Is my horizon brightened by its hopes? Is God endeared by its kindness? Do I grow in Christian excellence,—in activity, in usefulness, in the gainliness which commends the truth, in the superiority of purpose which sets forth its majesty? Friends—do they increase? and do my good offices multiply? or do friends fall off, and do I deserve to lose them? The sins that easily beset me—are they waxing stronger or weaker? Pride, touchiness, procrastination, sloth, peevishness, detraction, love of good cheer, sensual indulgence—do they wax or wane? or are old faults replaced by new?

Such thorough and honest self-scrutiny would supply materials for prayer, and motives to the earnest reading and hearing of God's word. And with the supplicated aids of the Holy Spirit, it could hardly fail to result in perceptible progress and improving character.

Nor must we omit the methodical reading of Scripture—that book so deep, so broad, that all the expositions in the world will never exhaust its meaning. On other days you may take from your store a few current coins; this day you go down into the mine, and you dig to add to your treasure.

But a main ingredient in human nature, and one of the most precious, is the social affections: and the Sabbath is made for the church and the

family. The tendency of excessive toil is to render us joyless, hard, and selfish; but this timely rest, like a reviving dew, cools the weekly fever, and makes our better feelings expand once more.

Pre-eminent among the means of grace are the sanctuary and its solemn assembly. Happy are you, O reader, if your lot is cast within sound of the church-going bell, and if an irresistible attraction carry you thither.

"The habitation of thy house,
Lord, I have loved well;
Yea, in that place I do delight,
Where doth thine honour dwell."
—*Psalms xxvi. 8.*

It will be no light cause which will detain yourself from the hallowed courts, and your own attachment to the place will diffuse itself through your whole domestic circle. So that all will be glad when it is said, "Go up to the house of the Lord."

And when the day arrives, seek to be "in the Spirit." It is *the Lord's* day. It would not be here if the Lord Jesus had not been here. It would not be here if the great Redemption had failed—if the sacrifice of Calvary had been found insufficient for the sins of men. It tells of atonement accepted; it tells of a Saviour ascended and a church redeemed. Nay, if that Saviour were not coming again, the Lord's-day Sabbath would cease to visit us. But it speaks of a better rest which yet remaineth for the people of God. A relic of Eden that has survived the curse, it is a promise of new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

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CONSCIENCE AWAKENED;

A NARRATIVE OF LIEUTENANT R—.



—See page 3.

MANY years ago, in the discharge of my professional duties, I was requested to attend on Lieut. R—, who was the subject of severe, though not dangerous, disease. I had been struck by the personal appearance and honourable conduct of this young officer. I think I never knew a man of more pleasing manners, or more gentlemanly feelings. He was universally beloved and respected, and for these circumstances his company was so generally sought after, that he became devoted to all the follies and unsatisfying pursuits of pleasure, so called. On

recovering his usual degree of health, he called on me to request that I would report him off the sick list, and, at the same time, tendered me some pecuniary acknowledgment for my professional services, stating that he had been accustomed to remunerate my predecessor. My answer was, of course, that which Christian principle and integrity would suggest to any honest man paid by the country.

This seemed to strike Lieutenant R——, and he exclaimed, with an oath, "Doctor, there must be something more than I thought in you Methodists!"—I give his own words.

Early in the afternoon of that day, he called at my apartments with a ticket for the theatre, and which, I know, he could only have obtained by paying an exorbitant price, there being two celebrated performers from London that night, which had raised the box tickets to four times their ordinary value. On his presenting it to me, I expressed my sense of obligation for his intended favour, but told him that neither my principles nor inclination would permit me to use it. Being in the act of arranging some tracts, I put into his hand one entitled "The Death of Altamont," merely observing to him, "As you seem so anxious to confer an obligation on me, put this little book into your pocket, and read it, to oblige me."

He left me to dress for the theatre, to which place he went early, to secure a seat. He sat in a corner box, and, as he afterwards told me, merely to pass away some part of the previous time before the play began, he took the tract from his pocket, and began to read it. So signal and mighty was the operation of the Spirit of God on his mind, that he became wholly and exceedingly absorbed in the contents of the tract, and at the termina-

tion of the play after midnight, he left the theatre without having felt the slightest interest in the performances. To use his own words, "Conscience was the only performer before me that night."

It was about three o'clock in the morning that, after having, on his return from the theatre, thrown himself undressed on his bed, and in vain attempted to drown the voice of God in sleep, he came over to my apartments, and knocking at the door, requested to be admitted. As long as memory retains her seat, I can never forget his haggard looks, and his tremulous voice. With a look of despair, and in a manner which seemed to carry with it a conviction of irretrievable ruin, he exclaimed, "Tell me, oh! tell me, is it possible that *I* can obtain mercy and forgiveness from the offended God of 'Altamont'? Tell me, oh! tell me, if you really think I possibly can." Hastily dressing myself, we sat together on the sofa, he in a state of restless agony, which expressed itself in incessant weeping and wringing of the hands, reiterating again and again the question he had just put to me. I at once led him to the throne of grace—wrestled along with him, that He, who ever lives to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him, would reveal himself in all his mighty, enlightening, and consolatory power. Whilst on our knees, I brought before him the boundless mercy of Jehovah, and the freeness and fulness of that salvation which whosoever will may receive without money and without price; and it was worth living for to witness the eagerness with which he listened to the simple tale of redeeming love, and the glad tidings of free and full salvation by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. The same day and night he scarcely tasted food, or took any rest, and no drowning man could more vehemently call for assistance,

nor any famishing man more greedily devour the means of support, than he sought for warrant in the promises of the gospel to lay hold of the hope there set before him.

In a few days it pleased God to enable him to cast himself as a ruined, helpless sinner into the arms of Jesus. I can never forget the expression of his countenance, pale and languid as it was with groaning and cries, which had been his meat day and night, when, on entering his room early on the fourth morning, it became almost illuminated with tears of sacred joy, and he exclaimed, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth, the friend of sinners, who his own self says, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' Look at it, do look at it, in this precious book which you gave me," at the same moment holding up a New Testament, "I have found the pearl of great price." I had, on the preceding day, directed his attention to the following passages of Scripture, among several others,— Luke ii. 10: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." John iii. 14-17: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." 1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Heb. vii. 25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing

he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He had committed these and many other passages of holy writ to memory, and dwelt on them with indescribable satisfaction.

From this hour, having credited the simple declaration of truth, he went on his way rejoicing, knowing whom he had believed, and that he would keep that which he had committed to his trust to the solemn hour when he should be called to appear at the dread tribunal of a righteous God, where inflexible justice would be satisfied with nothing short of that robe which hides and cancels all our sins.

Within a month, he was called to embark with his regiment for the West Indies, and scarcely had he reached that unhealthy climate, even before disembarking, when it pleased God, in his mysterious providence, to arrest him by yellow fever, and in a few days to call him to the realms of perfect purity and bliss. On the day preceding his embarkation, he supplied himself liberally with Bibles and tracts for distribution to all on board; and his separation from me was one which may be imagined, but which I dare not trust myself to describe. I was to hear from him on his arrival at Jamaica, but the first account of him was an official report of his death, and this was soon followed by the return of his faithful confidential servant-man. This individual told me, with the deepest sorrow, that after a sudden attack of fever, which deprived him of his reason, his master recovered his consciousness, and requested the presence of all his brother officers, to whom, in his expiring moments, he preached Christ crucified, as the only refuge from the wrath to come, and the only source of solid happiness. During this time, he held in his quivering hand the identical tract that he had received from me before going to the theatre, and with

this messenger of mercy grasped more firmly as life fled, he expired, amid the lamentations of those who esteemed him as a man and an officer.

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Reader, you cannot have perused this deeply interesting and remarkable narrative without having been convinced that it contains one of the most striking illustrations of the scriptural doctrine of the power of the Spirit of God on the human soul. You have seen that there was nothing in the natural disposition of this young officer—no previous tendency of the mind to religion or religious melancholy—by which this singular, sudden, and complete change can at all be explained. You have seen, indeed, that every thing was the other way. And hence you cannot but find it impossible to account for so wonderful a spiritual revolution in his history, unless you ascribe it to that cause which is so distinctly mentioned in Scripture as the origin of every such change—that mighty power wherewith the Lord works in the hearts of them that believe. Should such an illustration, do you think, be allowed to pass unimproved? Not so. Let it then have its legitimate influence on your heart; and reflect with gratitude, that if you need the aid of Almighty power to subdue your evil propensities, and to bring your soul into a state of conformity to the will of God, in proportion to the importance of such a blessing, is the freeness with which it is pro-

mised. The promise is without limitation as to any distinction of character. The Father will “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”

But, more than this, you cannot have read this very signal instance of the triumphs of divine grace, without admiring the beautiful adaptation of the gospel of Christ to the state and wants of man as a sinner. Our Divine Redeemer *wails* to be gracious. He is standing ready with his healing balm to pour upon the heart of the wounded sinner. As in the case of the young officer, when feeling the alarms of an awakened conscience, and trembling under a sense of his danger, the gospel presented to him the only ground of hope to any of our fallen race; so, if you, in the spirit of contrition and faith, come to the blessed Saviour, he will now set before you the same glorious hope. There is a great variety in the shades of human character; but let it never be forgotten, that—while it is the testimony of unerring truth, on the one hand, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and, on the other, that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by him—we are distinctly assured that him that cometh to him, he will in nowise cast out.

May every reader possess that peace and joy in which Lieutenant R—, after he knew the gospel, lived, and in which at last he died.

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DOING THE SHABBY THING.



I WAS waited upon by an intelligent lady, a Christian woman, who told me that her father was dying, and she had painful reason to believe that he was altogether unprepared for the better world. She knew the difficulties standing in the way, for he would not allow any one to mention religion in his presence. He was a man of wealth, and carried himself with an air of dignity. He had more than average intelligence, and was considered by all who knew him as unapproachable, and this, too, by the members of his own household. For a moment I felt perplexed, and hesitated: the lady saw this, and she said, with tears streaming from her eyes, "Won't you go and tell him of the

love of Christ?" Thus urged, I resolved at once to pay him a visit, and with greater anxiety than usual I bent my way to see the dying man. From the moment I entered the room I could see resistance in his countenance; and yet he was courteous and kind and affable to a certain extent. He knew the object of my calling upon him, for I made no secret of it from the first, but told him plainly that I was desirous of presenting to his mind and heart the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. To all this he made no remark, but immediately began to speak of something else; or, if there was a pause for a moment, he was ready to turn a corner, and more than once I observed a smile upon his face, as if he knew that he had been too much for his visitor.

These visits were continued for six or eight weeks, when I began to despair of any good. The medical gentleman who attended him was very much astonished to find the disease advancing so slowly, yet I could see a change for the worse, and increased weakness every day. I now resolved to take another course. I had my fears, and felt very diffident. I knew he was violent in his temper, and that there was some danger even to his life if a burst of passion should overcome him. Still I made up my mind, God helping me, to settle the question. So on my next visit I told him that I had passed through much concern of mind and heart since I last saw him; that he was going into the other world with all his sins upon him, an unsaved man; and that I was deeply concerned about the salvation of his soul. He got into a furious passion, and asked me what I wanted to do with him. I felt it best not to answer in haste, and therefore waited calmly for some minutes, to see if the fire should cool down. My calmness

and quiet seemed to pain him a good deal, for he had been invariably civil and kind, and had again and again expressed himself thankfully for my visits, always asking me to come again. I waited on and on, determined not to speak; at last he said, with much anger, "Do you want to read and pray with me?" I answered, "No; I will neither read nor pray with you while you remain in the state of mind you are in." I told him I never read and prayed with any one unless asked in a becoming manner, and seeing the rude way in which he had treated me, I must leave him in the hands of Him who judgeth righteously.

I observed a restlessness after these words. At last he spoke, but the question seemed so irrelevant, I wondered if the man was sane. The exact words were, "Do you think I am a dishonourable man?" I answered, "No." "But do you think I am a mean man?" I said, "Certainly not." Not yet satisfied with my answers, he again asked me, with terrible vehemence, "*Do you think I am a shabby man?*" I again affirmed that I did not believe he was. "Then," said he, with marked emphasis, "how is it that you want me to do a shabby thing?" I said I did not think I could be accused of doing shabby things, and certainly I would be one of the last to ask another to do a shabby thing if I knew it. But all this seemed so out of place, that I asked him if he would tell me what was in his mind and heart. I said, "I know you are not happy, and I am sure you can explain to me what now seems so mysterious." So he turned to me and said, "You do not believe that I am a shabby fellow, then?" I said, "I have answered you already that I do not believe you are."

And now came the crisis. The

dying man broke into tears, and continued for a long time to weep bitterly; when he became more composed, he told me that he was seventy-five years of age, that he had never asked God for anything, and he had never thanked God for anything, all the days of his life. "And now, when I am fast going down into the grave, you want me to go to the Saviour! and should you not call that doing a shabby thing?"

I said, "Well, if that is what you mean, I *have* asked you to do a shabby thing. It is shabby enough, when goodness and mercy have followed a man all the days of his life, that there should be no response, no gratitude; it is shabby to meanness, and I have asked you to do a shabby thing!"

Here there was a pause for some time, and then I began to tell him of the love of Christ. I recalled the words of his daughter, "Tell him of the love of Jesus." I told him that he was called Jesus (the Saviour) because he would save his people from their sins. I discoursed to him of the many Christ had saved. I quoted the passage which has given comfort to thousands, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," (Heb. vii. 25;) and thus I showed him that whatever else this last passage implied, it surely meant the uttermost in age, as well as sin. I now paused for a moment, and he said, "I have listened to you with delight, I believe every word; but I have not meanness enough in my soul to go to him now."

I now saw very clearly that his sense of right and feelings of honour were altogether based upon the pride of his heart: he had never done a shabby thing in his life, and he did not want to do it now. But I showed him that he had been doing these wrong things all through

life: every day he had lived he had wronged God and his own soul, and there was much less honour in him than he supposed. It was the old thing, only dressed in a new garb: ignorant of God's righteousness, he was anxious to establish his own, and not submit to the righteousness which is of God by faith. I was really perplexed; I hardly knew how to turn. I felt satisfied that there was a wilful determination to continue in sin and unbelief: the love of Christ and the gift of pardon through him were too great, without some merit on behalf of the sinner. This visit was unduly protracted, and finding that I must leave him, I said, "I am about to leave you: will you do the shabby thing and go to the Saviour now?" He said, "Will you read and pray for me? and I will try and believe; I will try and go to him." I read and prayed. After that I continued my visits for about three weeks more, but no light dawned upon the benighted soul. It was sad to see an old man going down into his grave with all his sins upon him; and thus he passed away. For some reasons I am glad that the means used drew forth from the man what otherwise would have remained concealed from all mortal view; it was a new phase of irreligion and unbelief, but one very obstinate in its character.

In writing this paper, and giving the facts as they occurred, it may seem to some that the course taken with the dying man was somewhat harsh and severe. But it was an exceptional case, and an exceptional method seemed needful in dealing with it. The man seemed to think that his honour was at stake, and that he could not have meanness enough to go to God *now* and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." While in some measure feeling his need, he

was yet unwilling to bend. There was still a certain amount of unbelief that kept him from trusting in the Saviour.

My readers will observe one expression which he used, and which I have often heard, "I will try and believe." In everyday life men never say, "I will try and believe." It is only in religion men "try to believe," and this, too, when already they have a belief in something; but, alas! it is not in a living, personal Saviour, who has died to redeem them. Who ever *tries* to believe that two and two are four? Every man's common-sense tells him without effort that two and two are four. The gospel is good news for the sinner. It requires no trying. Men either believe the message God has given concerning his Son, or they reject it. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. The spirit of self-righteousness is hid beneath many a garb. It is the most firmly rooted of all kinds of evil, and the worst to destroy. I am satisfied that it was at the righteousness which is of God by faith that this dying man stumbled, preferring his own righteousness to Christ's.

I am no theorist. I desire to turn away from everything but simple gospel truth. It is not for us to say whether the man was saved or not. I desire simply to go by evidences, and these in this case were sadly wanting. I do not, I dare not, limit the Holy One of Israel, or say what he cannot do, for I know he can snatch the very

brand from the burning. But the gospel is based upon general principles, and with these the labourers have to do, and with these to be content.

John Mason has said, "When a man spends the whole of a long life in sin and forgetfulness of God, and then in the last few hours of his life returns to God, he is like a young man whom his father has fitted for a useful and happy life, filling his purse, and sending him into the world, but who, alas! goes to the bad, and then returns home, and offers his father the empty purse, and says, 'Take that, for it is thine.'"

But to *you*, reader, instead of being any discouragement, may not this narrative be helpful in showing more clearly the plague of our own hearts, the self-righteousness which so obstinately refuses to submit itself to the righteousness of God? Whatever, while you read, your state before God may be, the loving welcome now awaits you, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (Luke xv. 20.) To the uttermost, and to the latest, Christ waits to save:—"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 42.)

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LORD SHAFTESBURY.



THE motto of the old English family to which Lord Shaftesbury belonged was these two words,

“LOVE, SERVE.”

That short sentence describes the principle of all genuine service,

whether to our fellow-men or to God. The truth is there—you must *love*, if you would *serve*. Begin by knowing that love of God in Christ which melts and moulds the heart; and then you will instinctively live a

life of service to Him who "loved us, and gave himself for us." Of all this Lord Shaftesbury was a rare example.

He was born in 1801, and died in 1885. His family was one of the most noble in England, and illustrious in history. But he outshone all his ancestors, inasmuch as his was a life of incessant and unselfish devotion to the welfare of his fellow-men of all ranks, and specially of the poorest. His early days were very cloudy. During the first seven years he was left by his parents very much to the care of an old nurse; and thereafter the days of his boyhood were unhappy in a great degree. Perhaps it was this early discipline of sadness that touched the features of his noble countenance with a cast of melancholy. To that worthy woman, however, who most kindly cared for him, he was indebted for his acquaintance with scriptural truth; and often in after years he referred to her, most gratefully, as used by God to lead him to salvation.

The nurse's name was Maria Millais. He used to speak of her as "that dear and blessed old woman who taught me in my earliest years to think on God and his truth. The recollection of what she said, and did, and taught, is as vivid now as in the days that I heard her." She died in London, and he would sometimes refer to her as "long since with the redeemed in glory;"—his eyes filling with tears as he added, "God be praised for her and her loving faithfulness! We shall meet by and by in the house where are many mansions."

From the time of his early conversion onwards, his daily walk was very circumspect. He openly, but without ostentation, professed himself a believer and a follower of Christ wherever he was. He sought to realize communion with Christ daily. His companions at

school and college knew him to be one who lived an unblemished life, in spite of surrounding temptations.

No sooner did he enter on public life than the Christian philanthropy of the man manifested itself in efforts put forth in all departments to remove wrongs, and to help the oppressed. It would take long to furnish even a mere list of the many objects to which he gave himself up, with intense earnestness. At one time he is pleading the cause of the chimney-sweep, at another that of the costermongers; and then he is labouring for Ragged Schools. The Lunacy Commission gives him no small labour; but at the same time he does not cease to throw his heart into the work of the City Mission, Bible education in schools, and the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Attempts to remedy the evil of crowded dwellings were objects he persistently promoted. And who can tell what the country owes to his most laborious efforts, year after year, to remedy the state of things in mines and collieries, in which children of thirteen years were at work, and to secure the Factory Acts, in days when little boys and girls under ten years of age, (such was the state of things at that time in public works,) were put to the dragging of sledge-tubs on all-fours, often for fourteen hours a day, and exposed to the foulest atmosphere. It was his efforts that were the chief means of getting those Factory Acts passed, that brought to an end all such bondage in the factories, to about two millions of men, women, and children.

He was tall and slender, but of an extremely graceful figure. His culture and his fascinating manner greatly contributed to gain him influence, in addition to his highly cultivated and powerful intellect.

But, better still, it could be said of

this nobleman, this man of God, that he spent neither time nor money in selfish gratification, nor yet in ease and idleness. In addition to all that has been mentioned, there were continual demands made on him, (demands which he most cheerfully acceded to,) for sympathy and help to such institutions as the Blind-visiting Society, the Home-teaching Society for the Blind, Training Ships, the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association, Sunday closing of public-houses, Reformatories of various kinds, and, not least, Missionary Societies, and public meetings such as the great gatherings in Exeter Hall. One day, when he had been advocating the cause of the Young Men's Christian Association, it was remarked how his countenance glowed with delight while pressing the need of personal conversion, and a real individual transaction between each man and his Saviour.

But what was Lord Shaftesbury *at home*? When his second son Francis was dying, the boy threw his arms round his father's neck, kissed him repeatedly, and then said, "I want to thank you, dearest papa, for having brought me up religiously. It is to you I owe my salvation." "No, dearest boy," the father replied, "it is to the grace of God." "Yes, that is true," replied the boy, "but you were made the instrument of it." O parents, can you sympathize in Lord Shaftesbury's joy over his dying son? and do you agree with the friend who said of the boy's words to his father, "Is there not consolation almost divine in these precious sentences?" To all his family and to his servants he showed the greatest kindness and consideration; and in his walks amid the stately trees and evergreens that surrounded his beautiful country seat, the kindliness of his heart found scope in making friends even with the birds who soon understood his crusts

and crumbs doled out to them. They learned to be without fear toward him; and when he observed them keeping aloof from strangers that accompanied him, he would ask the strangers to go out of sight for a little. Once when he had been six months absent, it was noticed that the birds knew his return, and flew round him as if to bid him welcome.

He was often at Court, and was held in great regard by the Queen. But earthly grandeur did not injure his Christian walk. Every morning and evening his household were gathered together to worship God; and as for his own private devotions, his intimate friends were able to tell that, on days when he was called to appear in Parliament, to deliver some of his special speeches and appeals, he had previously been in his closet, praying for help from above.

As a landlord, he was not only respected, but beloved. There was a close intimacy between him and his tenants. So real was this brotherly feeling, that, when one day in London he was observed to be dull and sad, and was asked the cause, he said that he had received a letter from his steward, who mentioned that the east wind had nipped the blossom on the fruit trees, so that his poor tenants would be great losers that year.

He was ready to take every scriptural way of doing good. He would accompany visitors to the slums and gin-palaces, giving tracts, and drawing those he met into conversation on eternal things. One man asked him, "How old are you?" He replied, "You are not so old as I am, but we are both old men, and must soon die and meet the great God who knows all about us,—every sin we have committed. It is a dreadful thing for a sinner to stand before the good but angry God. Do you know how

to be saved?" The man replied that he had heard a little about it, from listening to a missionary preaching about Jesus Christ. "Yes," said Lord Shaftesbury, "he is the Saviour of sinners like us. He came into the world to save sinners. For us he died upon the cross, he has gone up into heaven, but can hear our prayers. Ask him to save you, and to give you his Holy Spirit to keep you."

Spurgeon, at the celebration of his fiftieth birthday, asked him to take the chair, writing in these terms: "I should like you to come, because I want old-fashioned evangelical doctrine to be identified with the event. I am a fair representative of the old faith, *even as you are.*" He went, and was guided so to speak that Canon Wilberforce whispered, "You ought to bless God for having enabled you to make such a speech." "And so I did, and so I do, and so I will," was his response. He did not care for the Presbyterian form of Church government, but yet, when in Scotland, he says he felt it pleasant to be where "they protested against Popery, and preached the Atonement." He was also a true patriot and lover of liberty. On visiting Edinburgh Castle, nothing interested him more than the regalia in the castle,—especially the crown of Robert Bruce made for him after the victory of Bannockburn. "I have always," he writes, "sympathized with the Scottish people in their resistance to English aggressions. No Caledonian, kilted or unkilted, can more delight

in the triumphs of Wallace and Bruce than I do."

It was on the first day of October in the year 1885 that he died.

One of his last utterances was, "I am just touching the hem of his garment." Some time before, he had used these words to a friend: "I trust I shall go down to the grave and rise again with the line written upon my heart, '*Jesus Christ and him crucified.*'" The sun was shining in noonday brightness, flooding with light the chamber of the dying believer, as he closed his eyes and passed into glory, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

He was buried in the family vault at the village of St. Giles, in Dorsetshire. But there was also a funeral service in Westminster Abbey. An immense crowd attended that service. Nobles were there, and representatives of all classes of society. Profound sorrow sat on every face; for this was the funeral of a man who, like Jehoiada of old, "had done good in Israel, both toward the Lord and to his house."

Lord Shaftesbury's noble life is ended; but he will be held in everlasting remembrance. Of few men since the days of Job can it be more truly said that "when the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." (Job xxix. 11-19.)

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FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

A CHINAMAN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSION.



—See page 4.

MY name is NGAU. I am now a preacher of Christ at Amoy. As the missionary asked me what was my occupation in my youth, and how it was that I rejected the false and turned to the true, becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ the Saviour,

I give an account of what I passed through from year to year; and as I spread out the matter before God's face, I hope for pardon, and I will give unceasing thanks for his grace.

At the age of seven I went to school; at nine my father died, and

then my relatives took care of me. When I was seventeen I left school, and at eighteen I was married.

At thirty-two I met with some sailors, who induced me to join them in a voyage to Canton. On shipboard they asked me to teach them to sing songs and ballads, and to play the flute and the fiddle. On returning to my home I learned that my wife had died. During this period I was exceedingly wretched.

At thirty-four, having no one to help me in household matters, I married again, and thereafter went to sea. On board ship there were some vegetarians, who kept speaking of the joys of heaven and the miseries of hell. When I heard of this opportunity I determined to err no more, but walk in that way and adhere to Buddha. I became a vegetarian, hoping that Buddha would avert from me calamity and distress.

After I came home I did the same, and diligently recited the prayers. But, meantime, I had no way of earning a livelihood; so I went and became a constable at Yamen—that is, one of the lowest officials at the magistrate's court-house. Here, however, I could make a living only by casting away conscience, calling right wrong, and wrong right, and trampling under foot the law of heaven. I, therefore, gave up that occupation, set about reforming myself, and every day diligently recited both Buddhist and Tauist prayers.

At length, I thought within myself: "What is the use of all this toiling and moiling to make money? Had I not better shave my head and become a Buddhist priest, and, retiring to some famous mountain grotto, purify myself from the dust of the world?"

My mother positively refused to consent to my becoming a Buddhist priest. I then entreated, and said: "If you do not let me become a priest, I fear my life will be cut

short, and then I cannot serve you to the end of your days; but if you will let me be a priest, perhaps I shall live and take care of you. Why are you unwilling?" My mother answered: "You are your father's only son, and if you leave me, whom have I to look to? How can I let you go? Yet, as I see your heart is set on going, you may go; but, if I desire it, you must come home again."

My mother having already given her consent, how could my wife dare to hinder me? At thirty-nine, therefore, I cut off my hair, left wife and children and aged mother, and became a novice among the Buddhist priests; the head of whom, after teaching me, allowed me to go and live in seclusion in the Tiger's-den Temple. He also presented me with a couple of verses, which instructed me with fixed heart to purify myself.

At this time my mistake was great, and yet I was not demented. All I desired was to be saved, and for that reason I became a vegetarian and a priest, hoping after death to escape the miseries of hell.

The mountain grotto I lived in had been in former days much frequented, but now it was a solitude, without the smoke of cooking or the footprints of man. Wishing only to cultivate virtue, I was willing night and morning to perform the ceremonies and to burn incense, and to have only the image of Buddha for my companion.

The mountain was the haunt of tigers, so that no man passed my way. At that time, had the wild beasts devoured my body, I believed that I should escape from all miseries to a happy place. Next year my aunt met with some troubles. My mother sent people to summon me home to put matters straight. In my absence, my priestly garments, bed-coverlet and mat, together with the little wood and

rice I had stored up, were stolen; not a thing was left. My wife also died of cholera. My mother and relatives then urged me to stay at home, saying, "Were there any efficacy in worshipping Buddha, you would not have met with these misfortunes;" so I lost heart, and did not know what to do. I wept for very shame that I had been so long time a vegetarian, even a priest, and yet Buddha did not in the smallest degree take care of me, but that, on the contrary, I met with these sore calamities.

At first I had been full of zeal, in the hope that I would eventually become a Buddha; but now I saw that it had all been useless, and I despised myself for having behaved like a madman. Some friends advised me that if I learned to act my heart would have more ease. My mother was quite pleased that I should go and amuse myself with my friends; so to all manner of folly and wickedness I accompanied them, and no one sought to hinder me. When I was forty-two years of age, a woman named Lim came to live with me, and remained for three years. My aged mother was now sick and in bed, and Lim took care of her. Afterwards Lim, having to go and live with her son, advised me to marry again; but as I was unwilling to do so, she and my mother managed the matter between them, and got me married to one named Go. The very night that Go entered my house my mother died, and I was full of grief. Lim, after helping in the funeral arrangements, left me, to reside with her son.

Next year I engaged a priest to perform meritorious services for my mother's soul, and thought that in so doing I had fulfilled my duty to her. Then I went back to my old occupation, and for ten successive years went everywhere as an actor—to-day to the east, to-morrow to the west.

When I was fifty-nine, I went one day with my company to perform at *Kang-Khau*. I had just had my stage-gear stowed away in a temple, when I heard the sound of such singing as I had not heard before. I went to see what sort of performance was going on. On the way I met a man named Mōa, and asked him where the singing was. He said it was in the Worship Hall, and that men were singing songs. "What songs?" I queried. "Songs praising God," he replied. "May I go and see?" "You may." Then he conducted me to the chapel; but, being a stranger to the preacher, I did not dare to go in at once. Moa went in and told him about me, and he then came out and invited me to come in and sit down. He asked me my name, surname, and occupation. I told him the truth.

Preacher Keh then took up a Bible and pointed to several verses that showed clearly that Jesus Christ could save men, leading them out of the way of death into the way of life; and that the man who believed in and trusted him would obtain forgiveness of sins and salvation; and that believing in this Saviour made all the difference between heaven and hell. I replied that I long ago knew about hell, and became a vegetarian to escape it, but yet could not escape.

When I heard this, I became greatly afraid, and thought within myself that my sins were not forgiven, that all I had done as a vegetarian was of no avail, and that I had been grievously led astray by Buddhists and Tauists. Accordingly, I expressed a wish to borrow his own Holy Book; but he presented me with one, which I gladly accepted, went and carefully read, but could not understand. I returned, and invited him to become my teacher. But for the great grace of God how could I have heard this

doctrine? Alas, that I did not know it sooner!

Bidding the preacher "Good-bye" for the present, I went back to the place where the actors were lodging, and, calling them all together, told them they must go and decline all the performances we were already engaged for. "I can have no share with you," said I, "in this business." I then went and heard the doctrine for three days, and afterwards went to my own house, little thinking that my family had already heard what I had done. They were anything but pleased with me. With fair words I tried to soothe them, saying, "You, my relatives, although you love me, yet say that I am mad. Yet this madness is quite different from the former. Formerly the devil led me astray, so that I was like a raving lunatic, past all shame. Now Jesus has cast out the devil that so destroyed me. I am now keenly alive to shame."

The one I now trusted was Jesus my Saviour. God was my Heavenly Father; my sins were pardoned; my soul was saved; and though I had got a thousand pieces of gold, that could not be compared to having Jesus as my Saviour. I was not distressed at losing a lucrative employment, but searched the Scriptures with all my might, beseeching the Holy Spirit to open my heart; and the more I saw the iniquity of my past life, the more I abhorred it and determined to leave off evil. But I met with severe trials. Some men, having seized and bound me, proceeded to cast me into the sea.

With humble words I tried to appease them; but with one voice they said to me, "You have gone on in this preverse way long enough." They desisted; then, gaining courage, I told them about the Saviour.

At sixty years of age I was baptized; at sixty-two I became a preacher; at sixty-four I was chosen an elder; at sixty-seven I built a house which was used as a house of prayer. When I was seventy-nine, the church itself built a house for assembling in to worship God. Also of God's grace a school has been opened in which to teach the children.

And now I am fourscore. God's grace to me has been great. How can I ever forget it? I will praise him for ever and ever. Had I died at fifty-nine I should not have received the salvation which the Gospel has made known to me. The precious blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin. In this life, and in that which is to come, I have peace, perfect peace. Had not the Holy Spirit led me, the chief of sinners, to repentance, I could only with terror have looked forward to receiving punishment. God had compassion on me, who had never before heard this doctrine, so that I heard and was awakened.

I hope that any one who sees what I have written will take warning, and not, like me, stay in danger till he is fifty-nine. Turn and repent now, lest your life be not prolonged, as mine has been, to eighty. Every one of you, take heed and rouse up!

—*English Presbyterian Messenger.*

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1887.

IN A SNOW-STORM.

BY THE REV. DR. G. F. PENTECOST.



See page 2.

I WAS taking my usual "constitutional" after breakfast. It was snowing heavily, but the walk through the "feathery fall," and in the crisp winter air, was delightful. I had had a sharp spin of about three miles, and was nearing my place of abode in the town of N——, where I was holding special meetings. Absorbed with thought, and partially blinded by the fast-falling snow, I was very nearly run over by a sleigh, which was at the moment crossing the street at right angles with my own course. A sharp cry of the driver of the sleigh

brought me to a standstill just as he succeeded in reining up his horse. I then crossed the street, and he drove on in his direction, but immediately after turned his sleigh in the direction I was going. In a moment I heard my name called out,—

“Is this Dr. Pentecost?”

I replied,—

“Yes, I am Dr. Pentecost. Did you wish to speak to me?”

“I don’t know that I ought to detain you, especially in this storm; but if you could spare me a minute of time, I would be very grateful to you.”

“Certainly,” I replied, “with pleasure.” After a common greeting I put my usual question to him,—

“Are you a Christian?” To which he replied,—

“No, sir; but I have been to several of your meetings with my wife, and last night I wanted to get up and go forward with the rest and ‘confess Christ,’ as you explained it, but something seemed to hold me back, and I could not get off my seat to save my life; and my wife is also very much distressed about her sins.”

“Well, my friend,” I continued, “I am very glad indeed to hear that you are interested about your soul; but why don’t you accept Christ at once?”

To this he made answer,—

“I could not do that, you know. I have been a very hard case; I have not been to church for years, and I am a very ignorant man. But I do want to know how to be saved, and if you could say anything that would help me, I would be very grateful. Since I have been going to those meetings everything seems different to me, and to my wife too, and I am sorry for the way I have lived all these years, and I mean to be a Christian, and try to bring up my children right, after this.”

“Well, my friend,” I replied, “you may be a Christian right here, if you will. Christ came into the world, not to save learned people or good people, but ignorant people and sinners,—just such men as you and I are; and to save us by *grace*,—that is, without any merit of our own, just as we are,—and just now, immediately, without any further ado about it.

“Will you answer me a few questions as frankly as you can?”

“Yes, I will answer any question you are of a mind to put to me.”

“Well, then, first: Are you a sinner?”

“I be; and a great one. I tell you I have been a hard case.”

“How do you know that you are a sinner?”

“Well, I suppose every man knows what kind of a man he is, and I just know that I am a sinner.”

“But, my friend, you must have known this all your life, though it does not seem ever to have troubled or disturbed you. What is the reason you are troubled about the matter now?”

“That is one of the things that bothers me. The last two or three days, since I have been going to those meetings, I have been trying to be better, but I seem to have been a worse man ever since I tried to be a better man; and then your preaching makes everything seem different to me. Every time you preach, and tell how Jesus Christ died to save sinners, it just seems to me as if I was the greatest sinner that ever lived.”

“Yes, my friend, we are all sinners, and we all know it; but when God reveals it to us by his *word* and Spirit, and declares that we are condemned on account of it, then it becomes a serious matter. Do you accept this testimony of God against yourself, as a sinner, without question?”

"Yes, sir, there is no question about it; and now it seems to me that God is just saying that to me all the time, 'You are a sinner, and unless you are saved you will lose your soul.'"

"But God tells us something more than that we are sinners. The same Bible tells us that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Do you not believe that?"

"O yes, sir; but I am a hard case, and I am very ignorant."

"My friend, don't you see that your ignorance and your sinfulness are the very reason why God sent his Son into the world to die for you? If you were wise and good you would not need a Saviour, but since you are ignorant and sinful you do need one. Now, for whom did Christ die?"

"Why, for sinners, of course."

"Yes, you are quite right. Now, this being true, do you believe that, great sinner as you believe yourself to be, Jesus Christ is able to save you?"

"Yes, I believe he is *able* to save me."

"Do you believe that he is willing to save you?"

"Yes, he must be willing, or he would not have come, and that is what you keep saying to us every night, and you read it out of the Bible. Yes, I believe he is *willing* to save me."

"When do you think he is able and willing to save you?"

After a moment's hesitation, in which, with downcast eyes, he seemed to be pondering this question, he looked up and said,—

"Why, if he died for me, and 'put away my sin,' and is *able* to save me, he must be willing to do it right away—now—if I am willing to give up to him."

"Well, my friend, are you not willing to give up to him? Ought you not to surrender your whole spirit, soul, and body to him, and do it at once?"

His hand tightened over mine, for all this time I had been standing there by his side, with my foot on the step of his sleigh, and I thought the surrender was to be made there and then. However, he hesitated, and then fell back once again upon the declaration that he was "too ignorant," and had been "too hard a case;" and how could God accept and save a man who had lived in neglect of his law all his life, without he first showed that he was "worthy"? and so forth. I urged the truth of the "grace of God" upon him, and tried to show, from many Scripture texts, that "Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Little by little he came back again to see how Jesus had "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and that it was "in him" he had "redemption through his blood and forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

One more difficulty, and an old and common one, suggested itself to him, as a last refuge for his will to intrench itself behind.

"But how shall I know that I am saved?"

"My dear friend, had you done me an injury, and I had forgiven it you, how would you know that I had so forgiven it?"

"Why, I suppose if you should *tell* me so, or *send me word* that you had forgiven me, I would know it that way."

"Exactly. Then how do you suppose God makes us know that he forgives us?"

"I suppose when he forgives us we *feel* it."

"But why should you accept *my word* for the forgiveness of an injury,

and refuse to accept *God's word*? Why not take God's word for his *love, grace, and forgiveness*? Then I repeated to him several passages of Scripture in which the forgiveness of sins is freely proclaimed to sinners, especially Acts xiii. 38, in which we read: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;" and 2 Cor. v. 19: "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." He now saw that he was *saved* by the work of Christ, and must be *assured* by the word of Christ.

He asked just one more question, which I was eager and ready to answer,—

"How am I to take Jesus Christ for my Saviour? If I come to-night, will you tell me how?"

"My friend, you need not wait till to-night, and for the meeting; you may take him here and now, in the midst of this snow-storm, which seems to be saying to you, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' It only remains for you to decide for Christ, and confess him as your Saviour. Will you have him? Will you confess him?"

The tears came into his eyes, his chin quivered; and then, looking me full in the face, and tightening his grip of my hand again, he said,—

"I confess Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and I take him with all my heart."

"Thank God, my brother!" I replied, and then lifted my hat and bade him bow his head with me; and there, in the snow-storm, we lifted our hearts up to God in thanksgiving, as I prayed aloud for him, that God would keep him steadfast. His distinct and firm "Amen" testified that "the great transaction" was completed on his part, as it has been on God's part "from before the foundation of the world." I bade him good-bye, with a promise from him that he would be present with his wife that night, and publicly confess Jesus before men.

Toward the close of my sermon I related in brief this interview, and then said,—

"It may be that my friend with whom I talked in the snow-storm this morning is here; if he is, I am sure he will want to confess his Lord before men."

I had hardly gotten the words out of my mouth before he arose in his seat, and, lifting his hand, said,—

"I confess Jesus Christ as my Saviour."

Moreover, his wife was at his side, and she also confessed Christ. It was a beautiful testimony; and my prayer for those of my readers who are not yet the Lord's by confession, is, that they may take God at his word, confess Jesus Christ, and become of purpose his disciples.

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"WHY STAND YE IDLE?"

MATTHEW XX. 6



—See page 1.

"THE Lord has no use for lazy men," said Mr. Moody, "and there is little hope for their salvation." All of us know that consumption is a most insidious disease, and yet it advances and reaches its fatal end very quietly. So is it with spiritual sloth and idleness. "Slothfulness casteth into a

deep sleep." John Bunyan represents the Pilgrim Christian, when he felt the burden of sin and wrath, and when some sought to persuade him to take things easy, as shaking them off and running from them, crying, as he ran with his fingers in his ears, "Life! life! eternallife!" There was no sloth here.

And in another of his books, *The Heavenly Footman*, the same Bunyan has a preface addressed to "The Slothful and Careless People." And here are some of his startling words:—

1. "What shall I say? Time runs; and will you be slothful?"

2. "Much of your lives is past; and will you be still slothful?"

3. "Your souls are worth a thousand worlds; and will you be slothful?"

4. The day of death and judgment is at the door; and will you be slothful?"

5. "The curse of God hangs over your head; and will you be slothful?"

6. "The devils are earnest; they seek by all means, every day, by every sin, to keep you out of heaven; and will you be slothful?"

7. "Your neighbours all round you are diligent for things that will perish; and will you be slothful for things that endure for ever?"

After thus expostulating, Bunyan grows more and more intensely earnest. "If all this will not move you, I tell you that God will not be slothful; for it is written, 'Whose damnation slumbereth not,' (2 Peter ii. 3.)"

How awful it will be to hear the Lord, the Judge, rise up and say, "Thou wicked and slothful servant!" (Matt. xxv. 26.) Sluggard, art thou asleep still? Art thou resolved to sleep the sleep of death? Will neither tidings from heaven nor tidings from hell arouse thee? Wilt thou say still, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to sleep"? Look at that vessel sinking fast, and yonder boat is taking off its passengers. But see! a row of lazy men sit on the gunwale and are letting others fill the boat, while they indolently keep their place, hoping that the ship will not soon go down. But all suddenly that great wave sweeps them away, and the vessel plunges down into the deep waters.

"Oh," says Bunyan,—“oh that I could with Jeremiah let my eyes run down with rivers of water for thee! Poor soul, lost soul, dying soul! If thou shouldst lose but a limb, or a child, or a friend, it would not be so much; but, poor man, it is *thy soul*!” And oh, this cutting word *Ever*! What a soul-amazing word is that which saith, “Depart from me into *everlasting* fire.”

They that will have heaven must run for it; because the law, the devil, sin, death, and hell, follow hard on them. And it is all true that is said of the devil by Bunyan, to easy, careless, lazy sinners: “Sinners have not heaven’s gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man, all the men in the world, and all the angels in heaven, are not able to open them. And how if thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late?”

Only think of all this. To be shut out! What, out of heaven! and all because you moved on so lazily that the gates were shut before you got within. “The Master of the house had risen up and shut to the door.” (Luke xiii. 25.)

But now, if you are seriously resolved to rise at once and run, that you may enter in, let us try to guide you in the way. For mere earnestness will not save you; diligence in mere prayer and forms of worship will not save you. You must take “*the narrow Way*” that leadeth unto life. (Matt. vii. 14.) Bunyan warns you, if the Holy Spirit has awakened you out of sloth, and idleness, and indifference, to look well to yourself in regard to the way you take. “For,” says he, “by paths to heaven are most beaten; most travellers go those ways. But as to the one true way, it is in this case as it was with Rahab of Jericho: there was one mark by which her house was to be known, to wit, a

scarlet thread tied in the window. So it is here: the way to the kingdom of heaven runs by the *side of the stream of Christ's blood*. Therefore mind, if thou do find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way, be of good cheer, thou art on the right way. But have a care of lighting into any other lane, or any path, though it seems never so pleasant. If you do not find plainly and clearly the finger-post that has written on it, with the heart-blood of Christ, 'He came into the world to save sinners,' then shun that way. In this our day the devil beguiles poor souls that are very earnest and diligent, by calling his by-paths the way to the kingdom. But the word of God declares, 'We have boldness to enter into the Holiest by *the blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us;' and that way leads not through the rent sackcloth of our self-sacrifice, and fastings, and forms, but through the rent veil of the atoning sacrifice, the death of Christ. (Heb. x. 20.)"

As you press onwards along that way, be sure that you every day wash in that stream of Christ's blood, by the side of which the path to heaven leads. And if one reading these lines asks, "May I join the company who with intense earnestness are journeying on?" we have this good news for you, namely, that any traveller may take this path, and may use the stream, and find immediate blessing.

Once more, however, let us give you counsel from John Bunyan. "God has made Lot's wife a warning to all lazy runners to the end of the world. For, when Lot and his wife were running to save their lives, she looked back from behind him, in spite of the angel's charge. But Lot did not once look behind. We have sometimes wondered at Lot,—his wife looked back and died, but he would not so much as look be-

hind him to see what had happened! His heart was upon his journey; he must flee; and well he might, for there was the mountain before him, and fire and brimstone behind. His life lay at stake; and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him. Do thou so run! If thou wilt not, at any rate the people of God are resolved to deal with thee as Lot did with his wife, that is, to leave thee behind them. It may be thou hast a father, a mother, a brother, going post-haste to heaven; wouldst thou be willing to be left behind?

"Well, then, sinner, what sayest thou? Where is thy heart? Wilt thou run? Think quickly, man; it is no dallying matter. Look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it. Look to hell, and listen to the groans of a lost soul. Be sure thou begin betimes. Get into the way; run apace, and hold out to the end." "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. xix. 17.) Let us, in true kindness, ask you once more to consider what *sitting still* implies. If you positively designed to set yourself in the fairest posture for the devil to hit you, you could not do better than choose that of idleness and easy indolence. According to the word of God, he only is on the road to salvation who can be said to be "*running a race*;" for it is thus that Paul describes himself, 1 Cor. ix. 24: "I run; know ye not that they which run in a race all run?" And he takes for granted that all saved men are of his mind, for he says, (Heb. x. 1:) "Let us lay aside every weight"—ay, and specially—"the sin that doth so easily beset us, and *let us run* with patience the race set before us." We said to you already that God seldom saves idle or lazy men. As if to show us this, he likes to come to men in the very

midst of their busy life. Christ came up to Matthew the publican when he was at his work as a receiver of taxes, and drew him to himself. (Matt. ix. 9.) That man did not need two biddings. Christ said, "Follow me!" and at once the man "arose and followed him." When the simple shepherds were at their honest employment, keeping themselves awake by night, that they might protect their flocks from the attacks of the bear or other wild animal, that, coming from the Dead Sea, might creep up from the deep ravines round Bethlehem, it was then the angel brought the glad tidings of the Saviour; and what did they say and do? "*Let us now go,*" and "*they came with haste.*" (Luke ii. 16.)

Yes, and "*they found*" what they so wisely hastened to see. They found the Saviour, and were that moment filled with a new life. "The shepherds returned" (to their fields and to their flocks,) "glorifying and praising God." All the rest of their lives, they found in their fields something more than the bright light of moon by night, in the clear blue sky, or the brighter sun by day. These men who "*came with haste,*" (Luke ii. 16,) to find the Saviour, found light and joy had come into their hearts. "They had found Christ. They had found heaven."

But, perhaps, you who read these lines have found the Saviour. If so, ask yourself, — Should I not run Christ's messages now as eagerly, and as constantly, as I ran to him for salvation? A saved man cannot be

an idle man. The missionaries in China write home that every Chinese convert seems at once to feel that now they must be busy bringing in others to the Saviour. "Who will take on himself the responsibility of *doing nothing?*" was the solemn question once put to a meeting of Christian people who had been speaking together about the unsaved at home and abroad. Was it not a question that might pierce the conscience?

Have we got good tidings to tell, and do we hold our peace? Have you really taken on yourself the responsibility of *doing nothing?* In the days of John the Baptist, Christ tells us that those who were awakened and saved were so intensely earnest, that it might be said "the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force." (Matt. xi. 12.) Men were thoroughly awakened; they were as eager to obtain salvation as ever was a robber to seize that purse, full of gold and silver, from the passing traveller. Shall we not all be thus minded who know something of a coming eternity? Something of woe, and something of bliss, that never ends? O man, make for the shore! The raft on which you float is no place of safety. At any moment you may be swept from it into the flood. O you that are on the shore, will you not help? Can you take quiet rest because you yourself are safe, though you see so many others in peril every hour?

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THE LAST TRUMP.



Earthquake at Lisbon.

YES;—"the trumpet shall sound," (1 Cor. xv. 52;) and the whole earth shall hear: for it is "the trump of God," (1 Thess. iv. 16;) and it shall not sound in vain.

It will give no "uncertain sound." It will speak in no doubtful language; every one who hears it shall know what it means, and shall at

once obey. However terrible its sound may be to multitudes, they must obey. Its power is irresistible. It will be earth's last thunder-storm; and He whose voice calls it forth is "the Lord God Almighty:" the voice of Him of whom it is written, "The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the

Lord is full of majesty." (Ps. xxix. 4.)

The trumpet may be said in one sense to have often sounded during earth's history. It sounded at the Deluge. It sounded when Sodom and Gomorrha were buried beneath the fire of heaven; and it is daily sounding over the nations. It has been sounding during the year that is gone with awful distinctness of meaning. In the desolating shipwrecks; in the shattered trains; in the appalling earthquakes; in the burning theatres; in the wasting tempests; in the death-beds of the good and great; in the rocking to and fro of the kingdoms of Europe: in all these it has sounded again and again. But THE LAST sounding has not yet come. Yet come it will; perhaps sooner than we think, there is a *last* trumpet preparing for the inhabitants of earth. It shall go round and round the globe; penetrating not merely earth's cities and palaces and castles,—its villages and hamlets and homes,—but going down into the tombs of ages, upheaving the solid soil with a power more terrible than that of earthquake or volcano.

Yes; the trumpet shall sound. It has not sounded in all its terror during the past year. God has spared us a little longer. It may not sound during the coming year. But it will sound. Earth's last year is coming, and no science of man, nor civilisation of the race, nor advance of learning, nor accumulation of wealth, nor multiplication of navies and armies, can retard it by a single day. Man may entrench himself behind his forts, his iron-clads, his bulwarks of defence, congratulating himself on security against all peril from above and beneath; but the mine is preparing which will ere long be sprung upon a defiant world; and desolation shall break in upon its cities

like an overflowing flood, which will make its careless millions call on the hills to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them. "In the twinkling of an eye" the trumpet shall sound, and earth shall shake from the rising to the setting of the sun.

It shall be judgment then! long-suffering shall be at an end; and the sentence against evil works, long delayed, shall now be executed. The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night; when men are saying Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh, and they shall not escape. Then shall be terror upon terror, sorrow upon sorrow, ruin upon ruin, till all earth is wrapt in the consuming fire of God.

But meanwhile there is respite. "The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation." (2 Peter iii. 15.) "Space to repent," (Rev. ii. 21,) is the gracious message contained in every moment's delay of judgment. The postponement of the last trumpet by a single hour is, of itself, a gospel; and the abuse of this postponement by the sons of men, is one of the most sorrowful tokens of the resistance of the human heart to God, and its determination to risk its eternal future for the sake of present enjoyment.

This respite or delay is something unspeakably *real*. It is not forgetfulness by God of his threatenings, or an intimation that he will forego the claims of everlasting justice, contained in the ancient sentence against the transgressor, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." No, it is only another way of proclaiming the blessed truth that he has "no pleasure in the death of the sinner,"—and that he willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the "knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.)

There are few who lay to heart God's unwillingness to destroy the sinner, or realize the profound pity

with which he regards those who are subjecting themselves to his righteous displeasure. This marvellous delay or postponement of execution is regarded as quite a natural or ordinary part of divine government, an understood principle of the laws of nature, a connivance or winking at evil, without which the frame of the universe could not hold together. They look on it as something negative on the part of God; but refuse to see in it the positive forth-going of infinite compassion,—of that grace which unweariedly waits on the sinner, “beseeching him to be reconciled to God.”

Again and again have the solemn events of God's providence wakened up multitudes, and roused in them the cry, “What must I do to be saved?” But the terror passed by, and the awakened ones went to sleep again,—to sleep a deeper sleep than before. About a hundred years ago there came an earthquake which shook all Europe. It began at Lisbon, and went over one kingdom after another, producing violent alarm, yet ending in no repentance like that of Nineveh. It alarmed England, and multitudes in London trembled at the shocks then felt. “The shocks felt in London,” (says the historian of the Times of Lady Huntingdon,) “were more violent than any remembered for a number of years. The earth moved westward, then east, then westward again. Through all London and Westminster there was a strong jarring motion, with a rumbling noise like that of thunder. Multitudes fled from the city, and repaired to the fields, Tower Hill, Moorfields; and above all, Hyde Park was crowded with men, women, and children, who remained there a whole night. Places of worship were thronged with terrified crowds, especially the chapels of the Methodists, where

multitudes continued to come all night, knocking at the door and begging admittance for God's sake. Charles Wesley preached incessantly, and many were awakened. Mr. Whitefield went out at midnight to Hyde Park, where he preached salvation through Christ. The darkness of the night, the horrors of the threatening earthquake, added to the awfulness of the scene, while he with all his earnestness proclaimed the gospel, and urged his hearers to “flee from the wrath to come.”

It was like the first note of the last trump; and vividly called up the solemn message sent out at the close of the Apocalyptic warnings,—“He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I WILL GIVE TO HIM THAT IS ATHIRST OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.” (Rev. xxi. 6.)

God's last message to the world is the freest, widest, gladdest, which the Bible contains; and it comes to us just when the last trumpet is about to sound, and the gate of life to be closed for ever. Could eternal life be brought nearer to us than in these words? And God is in earnest. This is no pretended salvation that is here presented to us. There is no equivocation, no mockery, no deception here. God is speaking honestly and plainly. He means what he says. He uses no slippery words, nor does he send out an invitation to the sons of men from which he means to retreat, as if the grace contained in them were too large and free. He points to the fountain. He takes the cup of salvation, and presses it to the sinner's lips, saying, Thirsty child of Adam, drink,—drink freely, drink abundantly; there is enough for thee. It is *living* water, flowing down from above; living water containing in every drop the great love of God. Drink without delay, lest the fountain be closed, and thou left

in the greatness of thy thirst to wander on through the wilderness of a thirsty world,—nay, to plunge into the darkness and burning heat of the eternal drought; for the quenching of which there is no well, no river of life.

Lest the sinner should be in doubt as to the meaning of these words, the Holy Spirit repeats them ere the book is closed: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

After reading such words as these, it seems impossible that any son of Adam, the worst and wickedest of the race, could say, The water is not for me; and if I am doomed to suffer the eternal thirst, it will be either because the fountain has run dry, or because God will not give me what these words promise. He who shall suffer the awful thirst of a lost soul hereafter, must do so, not because God has refused him the water which he needed, but because he himself has deliberately refused to drink of the heavenly river which God has opened, and made to flow by his side,—“the river of God which is full of water,” (Psalm lxxv. 9.)—“the river of his pleasures,” (Psalm xxxvi. 8.) which never runs dry, and to which all are freely welcomed,—“the river whose streams make glad the city of God.” (Psalm xlv. 5.)

Children of Adam,—far off or near, dwelling in noble cities or wanderers

of the desert,—listen to the one voice that speaks to you in love, yet with divine authority. It calls to you from earth, it will soon call from heaven. It is no common voice. It is the voice of that trumpet of which we have been speaking, and to which, sooner or later, you must hearken, and in that hearkening find everlasting joy or woe, everlasting life or death.

The old hymn that has so often spoken in the ears of men still speaketh;—Oh, hear and turn from your evil ways;—hear, and be saved. Do not wait till the day of terror come. “Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live;” “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

Hath the invitation ended?

Is the cry of mercy dumb?—

Still the message is extended,

Still the call is—“Freely come!”

Still with sinners Jesus pleadeth

In compassion's gentlest tones;

Still the Spirit intercedeth

With unutterable groans.

Still the Bride—the Church, would gather

Every wanderer to the fold;

Still the everlasting Father

Would with love each child behold.

Then let every soul that thirsteth

Freely to that fount repair,

And, while yet its tide out-bursteth,

Drink and grow immortal there.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1888.

SIR DAVID BREWSTER.



DAVID BREWSTER was born in 1781, in the quaint old border town of Jedburgh, where his father was rector of the grammar school. His father was a godly man, with a vigorous intellect and a vehement will—"the best Latin scholar," the good folks used to say, "and the quickest temper in Scotland." The vigorous intellect, the vehement will, and the quick temper all reappeared in the son, strangely and touchingly intermingled with a wonderful degree of tenderness and sensibility,

which he derived from his mother, a soft and gracious Christian woman, whom, however, he lost when only nine years of age.

Besides the training of his scholarly father, Brewster had other advantages, scarcely to have been expected in a secluded country town. In the immediate neighbourhood, on a small family property named Inchbonny, lived Mr. James Veitch, a homely, God-fearing man, who, while pursuing the humble trade of a plough-wright, gave his leisure hours to the study of the higher mathematics, and made with his own hand telescopes that were eagerly sought for over Europe, and was in familiar correspondence with such men as Sir William Herschell, Dr. Wollaston, and others of equal eminence. By the use of his own telescopes he was the first to discover the great comet of 1811, and various others. "A self-taught philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician," says Sir Walter Scott, "he was certainly one of the most extraordinary persons I ever knew."

It was no common advantage for a boy like David Brewster to be in familiar intercourse with such a man as Mr. Veitch. And he made good use of his opportunities. Usually he would spend all the day, after school hours and a reasonable allowance of play, in the workshop at Inchbonny, and was rewarded at night by a survey of the starry heavens through Mr. Veitch's telescopes. When only ten years of age, he had finished a telescope of his own making.

In accordance with the usual custom in Scotland, where education was begun early, he went in his thirteenth year to the university of Edinburgh to begin his studies for the ministry, to which his father had devoted all his four sons. In due season he was licensed to preach the gospel in connection with the presbyterian Church of Scotland.

But he soon found that, though able to master the most profound problems of science and theology, he was quite unable, from the extreme nervousness of his temperament, to face even a rustic congregation, without such intense and increasing discomfort to himself as compelled him very reluctantly to renounce the ministry.

So early as his twentieth year he had made his first discovery. It was in optics, that brilliant domain in which he came to be recognised as the greatest discoverer since the days of Newton. In his student days he had been a frequent contributor to the scientific journals; and before he had attained his majority he was himself editor of the *Edinburgh Magazine*, a periodical devoted both to science and literature. And in Brewster, science and literature were found hand in hand throughout his whole career. He was at home in the entire circle of the sciences, and in the highest literature of the age,—realizing in himself, as Mrs. Gordon remarks, Lord Brougham's definition of a "perfectly educated man—one who knows something of everything, and everything of something." His beautiful invention of the kaleidoscope, though it carried his fame into every part of the world, and among all classes of the people, while enriching others, never put a farthing into his own purse. But for some mismanagement in the working of the patent laws, some of the great authorities in London told him he ought to have cleared a hundred thousand pounds. Besides his *Life of Newton*, to which he gave himself with all his heart, and many other literary works, he acted as editor to the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, a great and laborious work, which, however, from various unforeseen causes, involved both editor and publisher, through many a weary year, in endless worry and expense.

Though not without his anxieties through many a year, Brewster had a happy home and a wide circle of loving and appreciative admirers. The most eminent men in the world ranked among his friends. Men in power came to know the value of his discoveries and inventions, and learned to do honour to his genius; and shortly after, in 1831, he received the honour of knighthood, in recognition of his invaluable labours and services to science. Even then he was still so poor that he was at first obliged to decline the honour on account of those heavy fees, which, to the shame of our country, are exacted of those whom, for their genius or services to their country, the sovereign desires to honour. By this time Europe and America had vied in bestowing on him marks of distinction. Illustrious men from all parts of the world came to see and converse with him. In London, in Paris, wherever he went, the foremost men crowded to do him honour. In 1838, by a most worthy exercise of Government patronage, he became Principal in the ancient university of St. Andrews, amidst whose academic shades and grand old memories the next twenty-two years of his life were spent.

Sorrows of another kind had cast their shadows around him. His son Charles, a bright and beautiful boy of fifteen, was accidentally drowned in the Tweed; and the sudden blow had almost crushed the father, who was a man of a most loving nature, and of the keenest sensibilities. But it helped to bring eternal things more near; and his old friend Mr. Veitch, hastening down to comfort him, "was thankfully impressed with the apparent deepening of religious thought in the bereaved father." A few years later, and this fine old man passed away, full of years, in calm reliance on the Saviour and his finished work.

In change of scene and society Brewster found some restoration to former vigour and spirits, and returned to Edinburgh, to act as President of the British Association, in July 1850. Life now flowed on in a deeper current. Each sorrow had seemed to bring him more under the power of the world to come, though the time of open manifestation had not yet appeared. His home was cheered by the presence of a daughter every way worthy of such a father. But, though advanced in years, Brewster was still fresh and youthful in all his feelings and affections. Accordingly, in 1857, he united himself in marriage to one whose bright intelligence and winsome Christian ways shed a perpetual sunshine over all his future days.

In 1860 he removed to Edinburgh as Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the university. Thenceforward, scarcely a ripple troubled the gentle current of his honoured life. In terms of cordial friendship with all his colleagues, everywhere regarded with loving veneration, he seemed to have everything that earth could give,—a happy home brightened by childhood's loving smile, "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." And at last, in open manifestation and conscious enjoyment, the peace of God which passeth all understanding came to set the crown and consummation upon all the rest. Through many a year he had been with more or less earnestness a seeker, but, in God's good time, the season came when he could say he had found the Pearl of great price. "Night after night," says Mrs. Gordon, referring to his days of seeking, "the word of God was brought from its place and studied with commentaries and notes, even as in the early days. If ever there was a seeking of God with 'strong crying and tears,' it was by Brewster at this time. Frequently in the earliest morning, when the

writing, and the microscope, and the Bible-reading were over, have I been awakened to listen in awe to the sounds of prayer and weeping below."

He felt perfect peace in relying upon Jesus, in the certain prospect of standing very soon in the immediate presence of God. "And yet," he added, with something like a falter in his voice, "it is not without a wrench that one parts with all he had most loved on earth." That evening he was alone with his wife and little daughter, whom he loved so well, and by whom he was so well beloved. Weak as he now was, almost unto death, he would allow nothing to be omitted to save himself,—all must be gone through. "It may be the last time," he said. "We must do all just as usual." And when, with feeble steps, he at last left the study,—“Turn the key,” he said; “I shall never be in that room again.”

His family had now been summoned around him, and thenceforward, in the innermost circle of his love, his remaining hours were spent with unclouded intellect and in unclouded peace. For the last day or two he was attended by his friend, Sir James Simpson, a man of kindred genius and of kindred Christian hopes. "The like of this I never saw," said Sir James, as he came from the dying chamber. "There is Sir David resting like a little child on Jesus, and speaking as if in a few hours he will get all his problems solved by him." For in that supreme hour of dawning immortality his past studies were all

associated with the name and person of the Redeemer. "I shall SEE JESUS," he said; "and that will be grand. I shall see Him who made the worlds," with allusion to those wonderful verses in Hebrews, which had formed the subject of the last sermon he ever heard, a few weeks before. Thus, tracing all to the Creator Redeemer, he felt no incongruity, even in these hours, in describing to Sir James Simpson, in a "fluent stream of well-chosen words," some beautiful phenomena in his favourite science. Reference was made to the privilege he had enjoyed in throwing light upon the "great and marvellous works of God." "Yes," he said, "I found them to be great and marvellous, and I felt them to be HIS." He had little pain but such as came from intense weakness. The light was with him all through the valley. "I have had the light for many years," he whispered slowly, and with emphasis; "and oh, how bright it is! I feel SO SAFE, SO SATISFIED." And so, in childlike reliance and adoring love, he gently fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of Monday, 10th February 1868. On the Saturday following he was laid beside kindred dust.

Those visiting the tomb find on it the inscription, so simple and appropriate—

"THE LORD IS MY LIGHT."

—(Abridged from biographical sketch by the late Rev. W. Cousin, Melrose, in "Sunday at Home.")

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

MARCH 1888.

"THEY WON'T CONVERT *ME*."



See page 2.

HE couldn't half make it out. What ever had taken the fellows? Had they gone off their heads? Or had they been mesmerised? Here he was, forced to walk alone of an evening, he who had once, and that not so very long ago either, been one of as fine a lot of young fellows as ever joined company together. And wherefore? They had been "*converted!*" And as he said so to himself, he drew down the corners of his mouth, and made a very ugly grimace. He was very cross, and very puzzled, and very uncomfortable. Suddenly, as he walked along, down a main thoroughfare in the West End of London, a sound at-

tracted his attention. He looked up.

"Hullo! what's that?" It was singing,—hearty, manly singing.

"Ugh! I know." And the same look of disgust and contempt came into his face. "That's where they convert them."

Yet there was a strange fascination for him about the place, though he felt, or tried to feel, such contempt. He made up his mind at once.

"I'll go up and see how they do it; but they shan't convert *me*! Oh no! I'll take good care that they don't convert *me*!" He went up stairs, and found himself in a large hall, nearly filled with young men. It was a meeting of the Y.M.C.A.

He took a seat just inside, close against the wall, near the door, so as to be ready to beat a retreat, if he felt it getting too hot, or should he be unable in any other way to resist being put under the spell, and be "converted."

Many young fellows have a similar idea, that being "converted" is a sleight-of-hand feat on the part of a preacher, or a species of the magician's dark art. And they judge it to be an interference with themselves and their liberty, which is to be resisted tooth and nail; whereas conversion is more essential to their own happiness than their very life.

He peered here and there, looking for, and recognising among those near the front, many of his old chums.

The speaking began. "Now, I must take care! But they won't convert *me*!" And he listened guardedly all through the address.

"There! I knew they'd find a tough subject in me," he triumphantly said to himself as the meeting concluded; and he smiled a self-satisfied smile. He was inclined, indeed, to patronize the thing, he felt himself so immensely superior

to any influence brought to bear upon *him*. No doubt it was, after all, a good sort of affair for some fellows,—kept them out of mischief, and so on.

"I'll stay and see it out," thought he. So he kept his seat as the assembly began to disperse.

"What ever are they up to there?" He bent his brows, and looked over towards the door.

He saw a young man with a kindly look and a bright smile, shaking hands with each one, and speaking a few words in a low tone to them as they passed out.

It disturbed him. He grew suspicious. A dark thought crossed his mind; it cast a shadow over his face. Then a cunning look followed.

"I see! That's how they convert them! Ah! I must try and get out without his noticing or stopping me." And he moved cautiously towards the door.

He hung back until he fancied he saw a favourable opportunity, and then, bending low, he tried to escape.

But the young Christian brother with the kindly face had already noticed the stranger young man, and longed for him that he might not be a stranger to the grace of God. He put down his hand on his shoulder, and said softly in his ear:

"Are you saved?"

"Saved? No one can know that till they come to the judgment," was his abrupt response.

"Stay, then, for a little talk."

"Oh yes; I don't mind if I do," said he indifferently. *He* wasn't afraid. He wouldn't convert *him*.

He moved back, and waited. When all were gone, they walked up to the top of the room, and sat down on a seat under one of the gas lights.

His new friend opened his Bible, and pointed him to many passages of Scripture, showing God's thoughts of each of us: that we are "all under

sin;" that "we have all sinned." Then he showed him how "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but HAVE everlasting life;" and noticed to him that this was a present possession.

But the young man was hard. He had made up his mind that they wouldn't convert *him*, and he argued every point.

His friend saw it was prayer that was needed in this case, for God to soften the heart; so he knelt down by his side.

"Now for a *long* prayer," thought the other, drawing down the corners of his mouth, and wishing the interview over. He looked about him carelessly. But what was the matter? He heard not a sound. The godly young man, kneeling there beside him, prayed fervently, but silently. He could not make it out.

His companion rose from his knees, and pleaded with him not to steel his heart against the Lord Jesus. Still he resisted.

Down went his companion a second time on his knees. Again not a sound.

The other looked him up and down, measuring him with his eyes from head to foot, and back from foot to head. But somehow he couldn't "measure him up." He could understand one of his own sort, but this one baffled him. Ah! the world's tape is too short to measure the man of faith.

Suddenly, quick as lightning's flash, conviction of sin came home to his conscience.

"What!" thought he; "here is a young man whom I have never seen, and who has never seen me, and he is anxious about my soul, and I am careless." And the terrible conviction that he was resisting not man but God, flashed across his mind.

Like Isaiah of old, he cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Oh! I am a lost, guilty sinner, and I deserve to go to that hell that I have all along been courting, rather than be converted." And now there was praying aloud; but it was the prayer of a despairing soul. His heart was touched; 'twas remorse now filled him.

His old master the devil didn't care to let him go. So, as a forlorn hope, he insinuated there was no pardon for him; he had resisted God's mercy.

Just the way with Satan. If he cannot lull you to sleep, or laugh you into opposition, he will try to frighten you to death. 'Tis the same voice that hoarsely shouts, "Too late," that erewhile mellifluously whispered, "Plenty of time." But, thank God,

"While the lamp holds on to burn,
The greatest sinner may return."

As long as "now" is the *day* of salvation, the dark *night* of despair is kept away. This day has not yet darkened into black night for you and me. But delay no longer. *The night cometh.*

The time passed on; they cried to God together. The attendant at the hall, growing weary of waiting, came to put out the lights. It was twelve o'clock.

"Stay," exclaimed the young man; "I must be saved to night, or never."

He was real now. All was real around him. There was neither "plenty of time," nor was it "too late." It was *now*—God's time!

From the Scriptures his friend pointed out to him that God had accepted Christ in the stead of the sinner, and the moment *he* accepted Christ the reconciliation was complete. The union between God and himself was hereby effected. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

Blessed be God, he was enabled to rest on the finished work of Christ, and he was converted.

Further, not only was he converted himself, but through his instrumentality many others have been converted during the past twenty years.

It is *necessary* for me to be converted, and that at once. "Except ye be converted, . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) "Lord, save me, or I perish."

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.)

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14, 15.)

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry:

for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke xv. 20-24.)

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians v. 17.)

I LAY my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in his blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus,
All fulness dwells in Him;
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases:
He all my sorrow shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on his breast recline.
I love the Name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes,
His name abroad is poured.

I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child.
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints his praises,
To learn the angels' song.

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AN AWFUL POSSIBILITY.

"If I make my bed in hell."—Ps. CXXXIX. 8.



"WHERE is heaven?" asked an infidel of an earnest and happy Christian who was preaching the gospel of eternal salvation. The preacher thought for a moment, and then with a face beaming because of a happy realization, placed his hand over his breast, and answered, "Heaven is here!" "Yes," retorted the discomfited and convicted infidel, "and hell is here!" as he too placed his hand upon his breast. We do not stay to prove the existence of such a place as hell. Thousands upon thousands of our fellow-mortals carry a hell within their bosoms,

from which they know they cannot escape by any effort of their own. But there is an eternity of difference between hell being in a man, and a man being in hell!

"If I make my bed in hell," wrote the psalmist, "behold thou art there!" To us one of the most awful verses in the Bible is Rev. xiv. 10: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, *and in the presence of the Lamb.*" It is not the pouring out of the wine of the wrath of God that seems to us most fearful,—it is not the being tormented with fire and brimstone, inconceivably awful as that must be,—it is this, that all this must be endured "*in the presence of the Lamb.*"

To us the most awful prayer is that of men cowering and *hiding themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and saying to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us! and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."*

If I make my bed in hell, I shall realize that He who is the light of heaven, (Rev. xxi. 23,) is the darkness and gloom of hell. Eden, with God's presence, was heaven to *unfallen* Adam; but Eden to *fallen* Adam became as hell, and that because of God's presence there: "Adam hid himself from the presence of the Lord amidst the trees of the garden." When God's light becomes darkness, how great must that darkness be! If I make my bed in hell, He whose eyes, as they beheld the doomed city of Jerusalem, wept tears of sorrow because of the impenitence of that city, will, by the flame of those same eyes,—once so full of benignity and entreaty, but then so terrible and searching in their flashes of wrath,—kindle, and keep alive the eternal fire of my

soul's anguish. "For Tophet is ordained of old: . . . he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; *the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*" (Isa. xxx. 33.) How gracious the counsel, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Ps. ii. 12.)

If I make my bed in hell, *what will it then matter what my earthly position has been?* If I have been a hypocrite, if I have been a religious formalist,—correct in my general deportment, upright in my character, and attentive to all religious duties, but *with my heart unsundered to Christ*, and unregenerated by the Holy Spirit,—the mask will be torn away, and my very religiousness, to which I have trusted for salvation and for heaven, will, like a millstone round my neck, sink me all the deeper in the abyss of misery. If I have been rich, and occupied an influential position, the memory of those riches will be like a canker, and the rust of them shall be a witness against me, and shall eat my flesh as it were fire. (Jas. v. 3.) If I have been a sensualist or profligate, I shall reap an awful harvest of misdeeds. Loving friends may weep at my death, the great men of the earth may assemble at my funeral, the obsequies may be grand and imposing,—my minister may pronounce eloquent words over my removal, and marble or granite tombstone may be emblazoned with a recital of my virtues, and with quotations from Scripture indicating that my latter end is peace and glory,—but, ah! all the while my Christless soul will be in agony, unrelieved by a ray of hope.

If I make my bed in hell, *I shall bring with me to my dismal abode the memories of my misspent life.* I shall

there realize, as I have never done in time, the awful significance of the words, "Son, *remember* that thou in thy lifetime hadst thy good things." My memory, like a worm that dieth not, shall gnaw at the vitals of my being, as it will recall the tears, the prayers, the hopes, the companionships of happier days. I shall not be able to forget in that world of lost spirits the strivings of the Holy Spirit, the tender beseechings of friends, and the secret resolves of my own heart, that one day I would become a Christian,—a day, alas, that I never allowed to dawn. I shall especially remember those seasons when conscience spoke as the very voice of God, and my heart seemed as if yielding to the love of Christ, and when the joys of God's salvation were as if about to take possession of my soul. "Alas! that I allowed Satan to fill my outstretched hand with a glittering bauble as a substitute for Christ, and that for the sake of a fleeting gratification, or the fears of a scoffing world, I passed by God's Saviour, and lost my own soul," may well be my bitter repining. I can never, throughout the eternity on which I shall soon begin my miserable existence, forget the times when I joined with others in seeking the Saviour, whom they found and followed, and whom I also would have found, had it not been for the silly—but terribly fatal—dread of the laugh of ungodly companions. Alas, that the fear of a laugh—a sneer—a frown by a fellow-mortal, should be allowed by me to make the difference between hell and heaven in my eternal destiny!

If I make my bed in hell, while I shall have to endure companionship with spirits from whose presence I shrink, *I shall miss the companionship and the loving ministrations of those who bestowed on my earthly existence all the happiness I have ever known.* In the hours of my earthly troubles

their ministrations have been an un-failing solace; but in the eternity of anguish that awaits me no tones of love will soothe my mind, no ministering hands will ease my pain. On earth kind friends seek the alleviation of my slightest ailments, but in hell, where I shall need their presence most, I shall have to endure my doom without a word of sympathy, far removed in heart, as in locality, from those who now would give their life for mine. To behold the glorified in heaven, with a fixed and impassable gulf separating us, must intensify my anguish, for I shall realize, as the rich man did, that even the giving by them of a drop of cold water to quench my undying thirst will be denied me.

If I make my bed in hell, *my lot will be fixed for eternity!* Eternity! Immortality! Time without end! Endless life without change! Who can conceive of ages revolving onward in unceasing cycles? who can think without emotion of boundless duration and unchanging existence? A mediæval preacher is said to have made use of a striking and vivid illustration of what eternity is. "One lost soul," he said, "asked another, in impatience, 'What o'clock is it?' The spirit of whom the question was asked, after gazing intently at a clock in the distance, replied, 'It's eternity!' The pendulum sways to and fro, but the hands are stationary on the dial!" Eternity in heaven will be too short,—

"For oh, eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise."

But eternity in hell—

"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burning?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14.)

Reader, we have been travelling through gloomy territory, but the truths stated are not exaggerations,

—they are not phantoms of the imagination. But even while all that has been stated is truth, it would have been wantonness itself to have dwelt upon it as we have done were it the *whole* truth. Only a morbid mind would care to dwell on such a subject were there no way of escape, and did it not afford a strong incentive to “flee from the wrath to come.”

But hearken! God speaks from heaven: “Deliver from going down to the pit: *I have found a ransom.*” (Job xxxiii. 24.) Matt. xx. 28 tells us “the Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many;” and 1 Tim. ii. 6 says, “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” So God’s only ransom is Christ. And how is Christ a ransom? Listen: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*” Christ has become our Substitute, not that he goes to the abode of the lost, there to suffer for us, but he, in our stead, endured on the cross our hell for us. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,” (Isa. liii. 5;) “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” And God is not unrighteous,—if you accept the Substitute as your entire and only Saviour, your hell-deservings are all chargeable against him, and you are redeemed. Blessed truth! Rather, blessed Ransom! Will you give your heart’s consent to God placing Christ’s merits against your demerits, Christ’s riches against your indebtedness? If so, while Christ

reigns in righteousness, while Christ sits on the throne of heaven, your ransomed spirit shall never descend to the regions of the lost, nor will your soul be gathered with sinners. “Wife, this is all the hell we will ever know,” said a Christian man in poor circumstances to his partner, who had been complaining of their hard lot. “Because I live, ye shall live also,” (John xiv. 19,) said the Redeemer himself, and that word can never be broken. Ransomed from eternal woe by accepting the Substitute! What an exchange! “Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: *for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*” (Isa. xlv. 23.) Yes! but there is infinitely greater blessing even than being ransomed from woe, by simply accepting the Substitute. God says, “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away!” (Isa. xxxv. 10.) From the pit of death to the throne of glory! from the agonies of hell to the felicities of heaven!—all for the acceptance of God’s eternal Son as our ransom! all for the mere consenting to God’s plan of salvation,—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” (John iii. 16.)

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LIVING OR DEAD?



ONE thing is very clear,—we cannot work the mighty change ourselves. It is not in us. We have no strength or power to do it. We may change our sins, but we cannot change our hearts. We may take up a new way, but not a new nature.

Another thing is equally clear,—no man can do it for us. Ministers may preach to you, and pray with

you,—admit you at the Lord's table, and give you the bread and wine;—but they cannot bestow spiritual life.

Who then can make a dead soul alive? No one can do it but God. He only who formed man out of the dust, and gave life to his body, can ever give life to his soul. His is the special office to do it

by his Spirit, and his also is the power.

Reader, the glorious gospel contains provision for your spiritual as well as your eternal life. The Lord Jesus is a complete Saviour. To him the Spirit joins the sinner, and raises him by that union from death to life. In him the sinner lives, after he has believed. The spring of all his vitality is the union between Christ and his soul, which the Spirit begins and keeps up. Christ is the appointed fountain of all spiritual life, and the Holy Ghost the appointed agent who conveys that life to our souls.

Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you would have life. The moment the dead man touched the body of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet. (2 Kings xiii. 21.) The moment you touch the Lord Jesus with the hand of faith, you are alive unto God, as well as forgiven all trespasses. Come, and your soul shall live.

I never despair of any one becoming a decided Christian, whatever he may have been in days gone by. I know how great the change is from death to life. I know the hardness, the prejudices, the desperate sinfulness of the natural heart. But I remember that God the Father made the glorious world out of nothing. I remember the voice of the Lord Jesus could reach Lazarus when four days dead, and recall him even from the grave. I remember the amazing victories the Spirit of God has won in every nation under heaven. I remember all this, and feel that I never need despair. Yes! those among you who now seem most utterly dead in sins, may yet be raised to a new being, and walk before God in newness of life.

Why should it not be so? The Holy Spirit is a merciful and loving Spirit. He turns away from no

man because of his vileness. He passes by no one because his sins are black and scarlet.

There was nothing in the Corinthians that he should come down and quicken them. Paul reports of them that they were "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners." "Such," he says, "were some of you." Yet even them the Spirit made alive. "Ye are washed," he writes, "ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 9-11.)

Never, never will the Spirit turn away from a soul because of its corruptions. He never has done so;—he never will.

Why indeed should it not be so? The Spirit is an almighty Spirit. He can change the stony heart into a heart of flesh. He can break the strongest bad habits, like tow before the fire. He has done it often, and he can do it again.

The Spirit can take an English tinker, without learning, patronage, or money,—a man at one time notorious for nothing so much as blasphemy and swearing,—and make that man write a religious book which shall stand unrivalled and unequalled in its way by any since the time of the apostles. He has done so already. He did it with John Bunyan, the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Spirit can take a sailor, drenched in worldliness and sin,—a profligate captain of a slave ship,—and make that man a most successful minister of the gospel,—a writer of letters which are a storehouse of experimental religion, and of hymns which are known and sung wherever English is spoken. He has done it already. He did it with John Newton.

All this the Spirit has done, and much more, of which I cannot speak

particularly. And the arm of the Spirit is not shortened. His power is not decayed. He is still doing wonders, and will do to the very end.

Readers, do any of you feel the slightest drawing towards God,—the smallest concern about your immortal soul? Then flee to that open fountain of living waters, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost. (John vii. 29.) Begin at once to pray for the Holy Spirit. Think not you are shut up and cut off from hope. The Holy Ghost is promised to them that ask him. His very name is the Spirit of promise, and the Spirit of life. Give him no rest till he comes down and makes you a new heart. Cry mightily unto the Lord,—say unto him, “Bless me, even me also,—quicken and make me alive.”

And now let me try, by God’s blessing, to bring this subject home to your hearts.

First, let me put this question to every soul who reads this paper, “Are you living, or are you dead?” There are only two ways to walk in, the narrow and the broad;—two companies in the day of judgment, those on the right hand and those on the left;—two classes of people in the professing church of Christ, and to one of them you must belong. Where are you? What are you? Are you among the living, or among the dead?

I speak to you yourselves who read this paper, and to none else—not to your neighbour, but to you,—not to Africans, or New Zealanders, but to *you*. I do not ask whether you are angels, or whether you have the mind of David or Paul,—but I do ask whether you have a well-founded hope that you are new creatures in Christ Jesus,—whether you are conscious of ever having gone through a real spiritual change of

heart,—whether, in one word, you are dead or alive?

Think not to put me off by saying, “you were admitted into the church by baptism,—you received grace and the Spirit in that sacrament,—you are alive.” It shall not avail you. Paul himself says of the baptized widow who lives in pleasure, “she is *dead* while she liveth.” (1 Tim. vi. 6.) The Lord Jesus Christ himself tells the chief officer of the church in Sardis, “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art *dead*.” (Rev. iii. 1.) The life you talk of is nothing if it cannot be seen. Grace is light, and light will always be discerned. Grace is salt, and salt will always be tasted. An indwelling of the Spirit that does not show itself by outward fruits, and a grace that men’s eyes cannot discover, are both to be viewed with the utmost suspicion. Believe me, if you have no other proof of spiritual life but your baptism, you are yet a dead soul.

Think not to tell me, “it is a question that cannot be decided, and you call it presumptuous to give an opinion in such a matter.” This is a vain refuge, and a false humility. Spiritual life is no such dim and doubtful thing as you seem to fancy. It was a true and beautiful saying of a Scotch girl to Whitfield, when asked if her heart was changed, “Something was changed, she knew; it might be the world, it might be her own heart; but there was a great change somewhere, she was quite sure, for everything seemed different to what it once did.” Oh! cease to evade the inquiry. Are you dead or alive?

Think not to reply, “you do not know;—you allow it is a matter of importance;—you hope to know some time before you die;—you mean to give your mind to it when you have a convenient season;—but at present you do not know.”

You do not know! Yet heaven or hell is wrapped up in this question. An eternity of happiness or misery hinges upon your answer. You do not leave your worldly affairs so unsettled. You do not manage your earthly business so loosely. You look far forward. You provide against every possible contingency. Oh! why not deal in the same way with your immortal souls?

You do not know! Yet all around you is uncertainty. You are a poor frail worm,—your body fearfully and wonderfully made,—your health liable to be put out of order in a thousand ways. The next time the daisies bloom it may be over your grave. All before you is dark. You know not what a day may bring forth, much less a year. Oh! why not bring your soul's business to a point without delay?

Reader, begin the great business of self-examination. Rest not till you know the length and breadth of your own state in God's sight. Backwardness in this matter is an evil sign. It springs from an uneasy conscience. It shows that a man thinks ill of his own case. He feels like a dishonest tradesman, that his accounts will not bear inquiry. He dreads the light.

Sit down this day and think. Commune with your own heart and be still. Enter into your own closet, or at any rate contrive to be alone with God. Look the question fairly, fully, honestly in the face. How does it touch you? Are you among the living or among the dead?

In the second place, let me speak

in all affection to those among you who are *dead*.

Reader, dear reader, why will you die? Are the wages of sin so sweet and good that you cannot give them up? Is the world so satisfying that you cannot forsake it? Is the service of Satan so pleasant that you and he are never to be parted? Is heaven so poor a thing that it is not worth seeking? Is your soul of so little consequence that it is not worth a struggle to have it saved? Oh! turn ye, turn ye before it be too late. God is not willing that you should perish. "As I live," he says, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Jesus loves you, and grieves to see your folly. He wept over wicked Jerusalem, saying, "I would have gathered thee, but thou wouldst not be gathered." Surely, if lost, your blood will be upon your own heads. "Awake, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

Believe me, believe me, true repentance is that one step that no man ever repented. Thousands have said at their latter end, "they had served God too little:" no child of Adam ever said, as he left this world, that he had cared for his soul too much.

Oh! that the Spirit might come down upon your hearts and make you new men! I ask it of the Lord, as the prophet did of old, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.)

BISHOP RYLE.—*Reprinted by permission.*

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MONTAGUE STANLEY,

ACTOR AND ARTIST.



IN January 1809, Montague Stanley was born in Dundee. His father was in the navy, and with him when only fourteen months old, accompanied by his mother and sister, he crossed the Atlantic. The family settled at

New York. When they had been there about two years, Mr. Stanley died, and Montague, though but a child, was the chief solace of his widowed mother. Affectionate and intelligent beyond most of his age,

he won the love of all who knew him. The active-minded, whether young or old, are generally ambitious. So it was with young Stanley. He always aimed to surpass his companions in every youthful feat ; nevertheless he had no enemies among them, for his candour, fairness, and generosity equalled, if they did not even exceed, his desire to excel. When he was seven years old, his mother removed to Halifax, in Nova Scotia.

Shortly after this he proceeded with his mother to Kingston, Jamaica ; and in 1819 returned with her to England. Soon after, Montague's friends advised him to enter the theatrical profession. While in York, he formed an intimacy with an accomplished young man who was an infidel. The fruit of this acquaintance was speedily discernible, and remained visible for years in Stanley's marked dislike of those whom he esteemed to be "righteous over much," and in the adoption of a very low standard of morality.

In 1828, such was the progress which he had made in his profession as an actor, that his services were retained for the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.

In 1830, the manager of the Dublin Theatre Royal engaged Mr. Stanley. He proceeded to Ireland, where he immediately became popular. And now, when he had gained a reputation more extended than he had previously done,—in the height of his popularity, on the 28th of April 1838 he abandoned the stage.

The circumstances that led him to take this step were the following:—

Five years previously, in 1833, he married a lady of great respectability in Edinburgh.

A gentleman belonging to the family with which Stanley became connected by his marriage, left England for India, and was engaged there in his practice as a medical man, when he became the subject of

the "great change" without which no man can be a Christian. He wrote home to Edinburgh declaring how he had been brought to see the evil of sin, and his own lost condition as a guilty creature, and also how he had found deliverance from guilt and condemnation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Letter after letter arrived from India, full of earnest entreaties and tender concern for the eternal welfare of those to whom they were addressed.

The writer had his reward. Out of a large family circle not a single member remained uninfluenced. The change was as visible as it was real. The life within had transformed the life without. This altered state of things was far from agreeable to Stanley. For a considerable period he resolutely strove against the influence that was brought to bear upon him. His opposition was firm and decisive. He argued, and he ridiculed. His relatives were indulging, he said, in the rhapsodies of fanaticism, and assuming airs of sanctity as unreasonable as they were absurd. But with all this outward show of resistance, an attentive observer might easily see that he was not quite satisfied with the soundness of his own arguments.

The change that commenced within him was marked by his ceasing to regard the religious importunity of his friends as he had been accustomed to do. One who knew him intimately says of this time : "Religion was not only respected, but its observances were attended to ; family worship was begun in the evening, and every oath or expression of irreverence was expunged from the parts which he had to commit to memory for the stage. From tolerating, he was led to hate and condemn sin." He would seek to obey Him whom he had sinned against ; but his understanding speedily perceived the folly of supposing that present obedience, which was his undoubted obliga-

tion, could possibly blot out the guilt of his former transgressions. But even if it could have done so, the power was not his. Failure in the accomplishment of his most determined resolutions proved to him that his strength was weakness. Where could he find help? The word of God gave the answer. He read, with wonder and delight, of righteousness through the Son of God; how he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; and "his stricken soul was led in the deep exercise of godly sorrow and lively faith to the cross of the Saviour."

He had now for years devoted himself to the profession of his choice, and in it he had been successful. But he had ceased to be happy. The associations and scenes which once possessed so many attractions for him, he could no longer love or regard as he once did. A Christian according to the New Testament type he found he could not be, if he continued on the stage. Now came the struggle. If he ceased to be an actor, he must be prepared for straitened means, perhaps absolute poverty. He calmly considered the certain consequences of the abandonment of his profession. He did not act from impulse, but fairly counted the cost. To quit the stage was to choose immediate necessity, and possibly a hopeless struggle to maintain himself and his children.

That such considerations agitated Mr. Stanley as they were revolved in his mind, there can be no question. It was natural that they should do so. But the crisis had come. The day-star had risen upon him. Whatever the shame, loss, misery, contempt, might be that was to follow, he would no longer continue in a profession which he now saw and felt to be at war with the will and example of Him "whom his soul loved." In February 1838, he informed the manager of the theatre in Edin-

burgh, where he was engaged, of his intention, and the grounds upon which it was founded.

His engagement terminated, according to the notice he had given, on April 28, in the same year. This was the last night of his appearance on the stage; and on his return home he thus recorded his feelings in his journal: "The last night of my dramatic career. May the Lord bless and prosper me in my new one."

Now life was to commence again. When he left the theatre, on that April night, "he went forth not knowing whither he went." "But," as his biographer remarks, "there was nothing romantic or high-flown in his views." He knew and felt that now every energy would be taxed to the utmost to supply the wants of his family; and, therefore, looking up for the Divine blessing on his efforts, he at once commenced his labours.

He devoted himself to painting as the principal means of obtaining a livelihood; and to eke out the scanty pittance which that pursuit at first yielded him, he gave lessons in drawing, in elocution, and in music.

For six years he continued to persevere in his varied and arduous labours as an artist, and to rise in the estimation of all who knew him. His Christian character became more and more manifest. Wherever he went he left behind him the proof that the love of Christ constrained him. His was no half-hearted profession of faith in the Redeemer, but a genuine confession of his name. This was not unnoted by Mr. Drummond's church, with which he was in communion, and in which he was called to the office of "vestry-man," which he filled for several years.

He came home to his house at Ascog, Bute, on April the 5th, 1844, but so weak, that instead of the eager delight with which he was accustomed to receive the greeting of his children, and rejoice in returning

to them, it was with great difficulty that he could ascend to the nursery to gaze upon them as they slept.

On Saturday, April 20, 1844, accompanied by Mrs. Stanley and his medical friend, he went to Glasgow. The first indication he gave of apprehension that possibly his malady was of a more serious character than he had imagined, was when the medical gentlemen retired for consultation. "We are in the hands of the Lord," he said to his wife; "whichever way it ends, I can trust in him."

The next morning he awoke unrefreshed. He inquired for a little book of texts of Scripture, which he was accustomed to carry in his pocket. The promises for that day were from the 14th of John: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me," etc. He dwelt upon this encouragement.

To his wife he remarked that he was a monument of mercy, and told her not to sorrow, for that he had nothing but rejoicing—he was in perfect peace. His faith in God never seemed to falter. To Him who says, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me," he bequeathed the care of his beloved ones, with undisturbed confidence.

As long as he remained uninfluenced by the claims of God upon him as an immortal and an accountable creature, so long with his profession as an actor he was not only satisfied but delighted. But when he began to regard himself and his art in the light afforded by the New Testa-

ment, his satisfaction ceased. As his reading of the word of God, and reflection upon his life, confirmed his determination to be a follower of Christ, he found he could not continue to be an actor. There was no middle path. The reconciliation of the two pursuits he found was impossible. We have not to do with speculations on what the theatre might be, or ought to be, but with what it ever has been, and what it is; and we would affectionately and solemnly urge upon our readers, and especially upon any who may be connected with the stage, the fact so forcibly illustrated by the life of Montague Stanley.

We are not ignorant of the manifold hindrances that lie in the path of him who would obey the voice of God, and the admonitions of a conscience convinced and enlightened by the holy word. But those difficulties can all be overcome. They have been conquered. To the perplexed and struggling we would say, Remember the recompense of the reward. Let the Saviour's question be fairly and calmly considered, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Whatever the sacrifice you may be called to make, let it be made at once. There is no time for delay. Leave the concerns of your life with God. Trust him: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

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WHY PRAYER IS NOT HEARD.

BY THE LATE REV. W. NEVINS, CONNECTICUT.



THERE are some who are not at all interested in this inquiry. They offer no prayer. There is in their case nothing to be heard. They are content with the things which are to be had without asking. Such are in a bad way, and I suspect they sometimes themselves think so. That dependent creatures should habitually

and devoutly acknowledge their dependence before God, and that needy creatures, whose necessities return every day, and indeed recur with every moment, should ask God to supply them, is too reasonable a thing for men to neglect it, and yet be at perfect peace with themselves.

But to pass from those who never

make the experiment of prayer, we observe that some pray without any expectation or care to be heard. To obtain is not their object. Their end is accomplished in asking. They hear and judge that prayer is a duty owed to God. They therefore pray, that they may discharge this duty; and having prayed, and so done their duty, they are satisfied. Of course such persons obtain nothing. Why should they? If a child of yours should come and ask you for anything from a mere sense of duty, you would say, "Very well, you have done your duty, go;" but you would not give him the thing. He did not ask it with any wish to get it. He does not feel his want of it. He meant only to do his duty in asking. It makes very little difference with such what is the matter of their prayer—what petitions they offer. Anything that is of the nature of supplication will do. It is true, they generally pray for the right things, because the prayers they have heard and read petitioned for such, and they fall naturally into that style of prayer. Ask such persons if their prayers are heard, and you astonish them. That is what they never looked for. They never asked anything with the hope of receiving it—never prayed from a sense of want.

I have sometimes thought, how many would never pray, if prayer was not a duty. They never pray except when urged to it by conscience. As a privilege, they set no value on it. Now the truth is, when a man is really engaged in prayer, he altogether forgets that it is a duty. He feels that he wants something which God alone can give, and therefore goes and asks it; and feeling that he wants it very much, he is in earnest, asks and asks again, and waits, and pleads for it, till he gets it. Does any one suppose that the publican smote on his breast, and cried, "God, be merciful to me, a

sinner," from a sense of duty, and not rather from a conviction of sin, and a deep feeling of his need of mercy? And yet how many ask for mercy from a mere sense of duty. They have their reward, but they do not obtain mercy.

Some prayers proceed from a conviction of want, while there is no sense of want. The persons judge that they need the things they ask for; but they do not *feel* their need of them. Now, prayers which come from no deeper source than the understanding, are not heard. They must come from the heart. True prayer always originates in the heart. It is the heart's sincere desire. Or, as another has well described it, "It is a sense of want, seeking relief from God."

But there may be a sense of want, and yet no real desire for that which is adapted to the supply of the want. In that case, the prayer, not being sustained by a corresponding desire in the heart, is not heard. There is a conflict here. The lips pray one thing and the heart another. The request is perhaps to be delivered from all sin, but the desire is to be delivered from all but one or two favourite sins. Now it would be strange if God should grant a man's request to the disregard of his desire—that he should attend to the lips rather than the heart, and answer the prayer according to its terms, rather than to its meaning.

But sometimes the desire for the thing requested is real, while the mischief is, it is not *paramount*—it is not supreme. This is a common case. The prayer expresses what is desired; but not what is desired on the whole. Many really wish to be religious, and they pray that they may be so, but they do not on the whole desire it. They have a strange wish to be something else, which is incompatible with their being religious. Again, some sincerely desire the progress of the

gospel, and pray, "Thy kingdom come;" but they desire still more to take their ease, or to keep their money. Perhaps some of this description attend the "Monthly Concert for Prayer." But desire may be sincere and supreme, and yet not *intense*. Effectual prayer is the expression of intense desire. The examples of successful prayer recorded in the Bible evince this. The woman of Canaan sincerely, supremely, and intensely desired what she asked. Such was the character of Jacob's desire for a blessing, and of the publican's for mercy. Where the desire of spiritual blessings is not very strong, it shows that these blessings are not suitably estimated.

A great deal depends on having a petition properly presented. It is all-important to get it into the right hands. A petition frequently fails through inattention to this. If the proper person had been engaged to present and urge it, it would have been granted. This holds true of suits to the throne of the heavenly grace. We must ask in the name of Christ. We must put our petitions into his hands, and engage the great Advocate to present and urge them. Him the Father always hears. Even the prayers of the saints need an incense to be offered along with them, to render them acceptable. That incense is Christ's intercession.

To present a petition, is one thing: to prosecute a suit, is another. Most prayers answer to the former. But successful prayer corresponds to the latter. The children of this world are in this respect wise in their generation. When they have a petition to carry, they go with it to the seat of government, and having conveyed it by the proper channel to the power which is to decide upon it, they anxiously await the decision, in the meantime securing all the influence they can, and doing everything possible to insure a favourable result.

So should the children of light do. But frequently they just lodge their petition in the court of heaven, and there they let it lie. They do not press the suit. They do not employ other means of furthering it, beyond the simple presenting of it. They do not await the decision on it. The whole of prayer does not consist in *taking hold* of God. The main matter is *holding on*. How many are induced, by the slightest appearance of repulse, to *let go*, as Jacob did not! I have been struck with the manner in which petitions are usually concluded: "And your petitioners will *ever pray*." So "men ought *always* to pray, (to God,) and never faint." Payson says: "The promise of God is not to the *act*, but to the *habit* of prayer."

Sometimes prayer is not heard, because not offered in *faith*. "He that cometh to God, must believe." Yea, he must "ask in faith, nothing wavering." Sometimes it is for want of a concomitant *submission to the will* of God. He who said, "Let this cup pass from me," added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Often, prayer fails because the direction to pray *everywhere* is neglected. The petition proceeds from the closet, but is not also offered in the family, in the social meeting, and in the solemn assembly. Sometimes a specific direction is given concerning something to be done in connection with prayer, which, being neglected, the prayer by itself is unavailing. Thus, in order that we may not enter into temptation, we are commanded to "watch and pray." Vain is prayer to secure against temptation, if vigilance be omitted.

Prayer is sometimes ineffectual, because too *general*. When we ask many things, it commonly indicates that we are not earnest for anything. The heart is incapable of being at the same time the subject of many intense desires. The memorials of the children of this world are specific. They

are rarely encumbered with more than one petition. Does any one suppose that when prayer was made of the church for Peter, being in prison, they prayed for everybody and everything first, and only brought in Peter's case at the close?

Petitions have, usually, numerous signatures. So should there be *union* in prayer among Christians. Social supplication has particular value in the estimation of God. Special promises are made to it. Need I say *allowed sin* vitiates prayer? "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

There is a regard to the *promises* which ought to be had in prayer. Moreover, *confession* of sin out of a broken heart, and *gratitude* for good received, should accompany it. And there is a "praying in the Holy Ghost," which we should aim to understand and realize.

At an earlier stage of these remarks, I might have observed that some prayer is not heard, because it is *said* rather than *prayed*. Now, prayer ought to be *prayed*. The closet is not the place for recitation. What more common than this expression: "I *must say* my prayers." *Must* you, indeed? Is this the way you speak of it? Is it a task to which you are going reluctantly to apply yourself? and *say* your prayers too? How this contrasts with the cheerful purpose of the Psalmist, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning *will* I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

Perhaps one brings his gift to the altar, and forgets that his brother

has aught against him; or remembering it, does not go first and seek reconciliation with him, but proceeds to offer his gift; and that is the reason it is not accepted.

Many a Christian hinders his prayer by indulging in that species of unbelief which surmises that what he asks is *too great* a thing for God to bestow on one so unworthy as he is. He forgets that the greatest, aye, the greatest gift, has already been conferred in God's own Son, and the foundation therein laid for the argument—"How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

PRAYER is the soul's sincere desire,
Utter'd, or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold, he prays!"

O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1888.

MY MOTHER.



See page 3.

JUST on the outskirts of Rochdale, on the side of the highway leading to Manchester, at a place called Sparth, there formerly stood a large stone table, supported by three thick stone pillars. Here, in bygone days, country farmers brought their milk, and were met by their town customers with pitchers; owing to this custom

it was designated the Milkstone. Underneath it many a schoolboy had taken shelter from the storm, and on the top of it many a weary traveller laid down his heavy burden.

Amongst the many thousands that made this stone a resting-place, two have a special interest.

One cold winter day, a young man was seen going from Rochdale towards Marsland Workhouse with an old man on his back: the young man's strength being exhausted, he set down the old man in a sitting posture on the Milkstone. While both were resting, the old man began to weep most bitterly. "You may cry as hard as you like," said the young man, "but to the workhouse you shall go, if my legs can carry you; for I will not be burdened with you any longer."

"I am not weeping because thou art taking me to the workhouse, my son, but because of my own cruelty to thy grandfather. Twenty-five years since, this very day, I was carrying him on my back to the workhouse, and rested with him on this very stone. He wept, and begged I would let him live with me the few days he had to live; but I mocked his sorrow, turned a deaf ear to his cries and tears, and took him to the workhouse. It is the thought of such cruel conduct to my poor old dead father that makes me weep." The son was amazed, and said,—

"Get on to my back, father, and I will take you home again, for if that be the way, my turn will come next; it seems it is weight for weight. Get on to my back, and you shall have your old corner, and rock the little children."

One hot summer day, a poor woman was seen toiling up the hill called Fletcher Round, with a flannel "piece" on her back. A little boy was walking by her side. On reaching the Milkstone she laid down her heavy burden, and, leaning on the "piece" for support, she wiped the sweat from her face with her check apron. With a look of affection, the boy gazed into the face of his mother, and said,—“Mother, when I get a little bigger you shall never carry another ‘piece.’ I will carry them all, and you shall walk by my side.”

The impression made on my mind on that hot summer day, while my mother was resting and wiping the sweat from her flushed face, was amply confirmed in my after life. On awakening to a sense of our social position as a family, I found we were not amongst those considered respectable in our neighbourhood. The test of respectability consisted in having a set of mahogany drawers, and an eight-day clock in a mahogany case; a holiday-shirt for the young men, and a printed dress with a large flounce for the young women.

One Saturday evening I was playing with my companions, when my mother gently laid her hand on my head, and requested me to go with her into the house.

"What do you want me for, mother? It is not time to go to bed yet."

"I know it is soon to call you from your play; but I cannot help it. Your trousers want mending; and I want to wash your shirt; for though we are poor, we ought to be clean. I intended to get you a pair of clogs, but I am not able. I am making you a pinafore out of part of a wool-sheet; it will cover your ragged clothes, and you will then look a little better."

I crept naked into my humble bed,—not to sleep, but to think and to weep.

Sunday morning ever found my mother doing all she could to get us away in time for school. She rose the first and lighted the fire, got ready the breakfast, dressed the younger children, and helped us all. This Sunday morning I was going to have on my new "bishop," to cover my patched garments. I shall never forget that new pinafore. The wool sheets had at that time stamped on them, in large black letters, the word WOOL. My mother had got one of these old sheets as a gift from the warehouse; but it was so far worn

that she could not make my pinafore without either putting on a patch, or cutting through the letters. She chose the lesser evil, thinking she could wash out the letters; but though she washed, and washed, and washed again, she could not destroy the remaining half of the word.

"Never mind, mother; never mind. It will do very well. It covers my patches; and when I get to school I will sit on the letters, and then no one will see them."

Away I went to the Sunday school, with bare feet, and a pack-sheet pinafore, with half the letters WOOL down one side, to take my place in the third Bible class, among boys who were much better dressed, and who did not like to sit beside me on that account.

It was the custom in our Sunday school to give the boy who was first in the class, when the bell rang for closing in the afternoon, a round tin ticket of merit, bearing a figure 1. These tickets were collected once each year, and the boy having the largest number had the most valuable prize presented to him. Teachers, scholars, parents, friends, and members of the congregation, assembled in the large schoolroom to have tea, and to witness the distribution of the prizes. One year I had just one more ticket than any other boy in the school; and, consequently, I was entitled to receive the highest honour.

"Mother, do you think you could get me a second-hand pair of clogs for to-morrow?"

She was darning my father's stockings when I made the request. At length she said,—

"I know you are going to have the first prize at the school, my child, and I have done all that I could to send you there decent. I have tried to borrow a shilling from the publican's wife, where your father

takes much of his earnings, but she scorned me, and refused to lend it me. I have been to several of our neighbours to ask them to lend me the money, but our well-known poverty seems to have separated us from all help."

"But we have a very near relation, mother, who dresses like a gentleman. Shall I go and ask him to lend us two shillings?"

"You may go, but I don't think you will get it; and it is two miles to his house."

Away I went. I was soon there, for I could run swiftly. But when I got to the house, my courage failed me. I stood for a long time near the door, first on one foot, and then on the other, warming them by turns with my hands; for the night was wet and cold. At length the proud man saw me, came to the door, and inquired my errand.

"Will you be so kind as to lend mother two shillings to buy me a second-hand pair of clogs? I have nothing to put on my feet, and I am going to receive my reward to-morrow at the school. I hope you will lend it her."

"Tell your mother that when she has paid me back the eighteen-pence she borrowed some time since I will then talk about the two shillings, and not till then. Never mind your feet; toes were made before clogs."

On returning home, my mother saw by my countenance that I had not got the money.

The following day I washed my feet for a long time. I was determined that if I could not get anything to cover my ten toes, I would make them look clean.

On the table the prizes were arranged with as much display as possible. Books, penknives, pocket-knives, inkstands, a small writing-desk, and other valuables arrested the attention of all who entered the school. One of the superintendents

made a speech. When he came to the first prize, he called out my name, and invited me on to the platform. I arose from my corner, and, threading my way through the people, I walked blushing on to the platform, and received my reward of merit amidst the repeated clapping of the audience. But when I got back to my place, I sat down and cried as though my heart would break, because I was such a poor, poor boy.

And here, though a little out of order, I will mention a circumstance that took place about twelve years after. I was then grown into a young man. One Sabbath evening, my mother, as usual, was seated in her pew in the house of God. The congregation was very large, and all were silently waiting for the appearance of the preacher. He, poor man, was on his knees in the vestry, praying for divine help. One of the deacons opened the vestry door, and the young preacher rose from his knees and ascended to the pulpit. There was an elderly female among the congregation whose face was covered with her hands, and whose head was bowed in deep reverence. That woman was my own dear mother!—and the young, trembling, timid preacher, was myself!—her once little barefooted, ragged boy,—her own dear child. But now we had met again in the sanctuary,—she to weep for joy; and I, her son,—a sinner saved by grace, and a preacher of the gospel of peace.

But I have said she was a praying woman, and that explains everything. But she was obliged to pray in secret;

and very often her week-night attendance at the means of grace was taken by stealth, or as frequently refused with abuse. Still she held on her way amidst every storm,—living a life of faith in the Son of God, and enduring to the end.

I well remember one of my mother's prayers. It being the wakes at Rochdale, I had risen early, to have a long play-day. I was softly creeping down-stairs, fearing to disturb any of the family, when I heard a low voice. It was my mother's voice, and she was praying for all her children by name. Her words went to my young heart, and they are ringing in my ears to this hour. "Lord bless John." That short prayer, uttered by my mother when she thought no one heard her but God, has been to me a precious legacy.

The ministers and elders of the church of which my mother was a member, held her in the highest esteem, and on her leaving them to join the church above, ordered for her a funeral sermon. Eight sons and daughters were present on that mournful occasion; and now the remains of both my parents repose in the burying-ground belonging to Bamford Chapel,—my father aged seventy-five, and mother seventy-seven. Sacred is that place to me, and never do I stand beside that hallowed spot but I thank God for a meek, patient, PRAYING MOTHER.

—JOHN ASHWORTH. *Reprinted by permission, abridged.*

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1888.

HEALED, OR DELUDED? WHICH?

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."—JER. viii. 11.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise."—JER. xvii. 14.



1. We sorrowfully assert that in the interests of our souls IT IS VERY EASY FOR US TO BE THE SUBJECTS OF A FALSE HEALING. I am not going to talk about the inhabitants of the Island of Laputa: I am now speaking straight to every one of you, and I am setting myself in the middle pew, that my keenest sentence may enter my own bosom as well as

yours. I say, we are all of us in danger of being the subjects of a false healing: ministers, deacons, elders, church members, aged professors, and young beginners—all alike.

We might infer this from the fact that no doubt *a large number of persons are so deceived*. If a large number of persons are so, then why should not we be? The tendency of other men is probably in us also. Why not? Are there not many persons who consider that all is well with them because they have been observant of church ordinances from their youth up, and their parents were observant for them before they actually came upon the stage of responsibility? Were they not duly christened and correctly confirmed? Have they not taken the sacrament? Have they not gone through every form that is required by the sect to which they belong? What more can be needed? They do not, in so many words, assert that these ceremonies have given them perfect wholeness before God, but secretly they pour this flattering unction upon their souls, and lie down in quietness.

Too many are reliant entirely upon external religion. If that be attended to carefully, they conclude that all is right. To sing a hymn is in their minds a good thing, though their heart never praises God; to join in the posture of prayer is to them an excellent thing, though their heart never cries to God for mercy. Alas! that men should dream that the hollow hypocrisy which insults God with empty forms should have a magical virtue in it.

I am afraid, too, that many who do not rely upon religious forms yet confide in doctrinal beliefs. They are sound in the faith—Orthodox, Evangelical, and Calvinistic. They heartily detest any doctrine that is not scriptural. I am glad to find that it is so with them; but let them not rest in this. Many are the

quackeries of the spiritual world; if others are deceived, may not you be?

Depend upon this, that *if there is a chance of our being deceived at all, we are always ready to aid in the deception*. As a rule, we are all inclined to think too well of ourselves. I daresay that if any cautious flatterer will assure me that I am a very wise person, I shall before long come to the conclusion that he is a remarkably sensible and far-seeing individual. If any one should accuse you of a virtue which you never possessed, if he would but persevere long enough with his pleasing insinuation, you will begin to smile inwardly, and hint to your conscience that there are latent excellencies about you which this man with prophetic glance has discovered. The devil knows the exact bait for persuading the heart that all is well, while in fact nothing is well. How pleased we are when we jump to the conclusion that we have passed from death unto life, and are indeed the servants of the living God. We do not look back to see whether there was any new birth, whether there was any change of heart, whether there was any laying hold on righteousness, whether there was any severance from self, and union to Christ. The irksome duty of self-examination is cried down as unbelief, and we are bidden to shut our eyes and make up our minds that all is right. "Believe that you are well, and you are well," seems to be the gospel of many, but it is not the gospel of Jesus.

Besides, *flatterers are not yet an extinct race*. False prophets abounded in Jeremiah's day, and they may be met with still. They are to be found in several places of worship in London, but you had better leave them alone. There is a flatterer in your own bosom, namely, proud self. Another flatterer often crosses your path, and is eager to destroy your soul—I mean Satan. If by any

possibility you can be beguiled to put up with something which looks like healing, but which is not, you shall have all the art and craft of hell to help you in it. Instead of faith, they shall have presumption; for regeneration, they shall have reformation; for holiness, morality; for purity, censoriousness; for zeal, fanaticism; for grace, fancy; and for Christ and his cross, human works and their merit. Many who profess to love you will aid the general deceit, and puff you up with the idea of being what you are not.

Slight healing is sure to be fashionable among a great many, *because it requires so little thought*. People will do anything but think according to the word of God. They will both think and speak against the revealed will and truth of God, but to consider what the Lord hath said is not at all to their mind. He seems to be most honoured now-a-days who will invent the most monstrous theory, and stand to it. The more absurd it is the better, so long as it is opposed to the Bible and to the accepted beliefs. Sober thought about one's own soul and its destiny is by no means a favourite occupation with men.

Superficial religion also will always be fashionable, *because it does not require self-denial*. A man may be outwardly religious, and yet be a private tippler, but he cannot be a true Christian at that rate; such secret defilement he must abandon. That, however, is a blow too near the root for many; they like not so sharp an axe as that. Or perhaps he has enmity towards his brother. Now he can go to mass or attend early communion, and yet hate his brother; but he cannot go to heaven and do that, he cannot be a regenerate man and do that. He may be following all the while some secret lust, and yet be a great man in his church, so long as he can keep his wantonness hidden away from prying eyes. A

superficial religion suits the unclean gentleman; but genuine godliness will not allow a darling lust to live.

Slight healing, also, is sought by men, *because it does not require spirituality*. There are multitudes of men, who, if the kingdom of heaven were to be had by outward actions, no matter how difficult, would at once commence the task. Say, "You must save so many hundreds of pounds and buy heaven," and they would starve themselves until they had hoarded up the money. Anything that could be done by the body would be cheerfully attempted; but true religion is spiritual, and carnal men cannot get at it: it is high above, and out of their sight.

My dear reader, let me warn you with all the energy I possess against ever being satisfied with any of the slight healings that are cried up now-a-days, *because they will all end in disappointment*, as sure as you are living men. It will be a fearful thing, when you are racked with pain and depressed in spirit, to see all your evidences blotted and blurred, and all your hopes of heaven cancelled by the hand of truth before your sight. Suffering times call for realities, solidities, eternal verities, for then it is that dark thoughts crowd in upon the soul, and anxious questions which must and will have an answer. Then conscience talks in this fashion:—"Ye must be born again." Are ye born again? "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Has that blood-shedding ever come near to you? Such thoughts as these gather around the spirit in the dead of night, and haunt the soul. Unless you fix your eye upon the cross, and can answer, "I have believed in Jesus for salvation, and I still believe in him. I have forsaken every evil way, and I am still striving against sin. I am a renewed man; I am struggling to

the light, and struggling up to purity and to my God ;"—unless, I say, you can give such firm and solid answers, there will be hard times for you.

II. BE IT OURS TO SEEK TRUE HEALING. The healing which we need must go to the root of the business, and work a thorough change. Such a work is described in Scripture as a creation—"created anew in Christ Jesus ;" it must be a resurrection—"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Now I ask you, my dear brethren, whether you can undertake this? Creation and resurrection, do these lie in your power? You can do nothing of the kind, and so you are driven to my second text—"O Lord, heal me, and I shall be healed ; save me, and I shall be saved." Be it known unto every one of you, men and brethren, that you must be the subjects of a divine power, by which you must be as totally changed as if you had been annihilated and then created anew.

By one tremendous sacrifice which he offered unto the Father, the Lord Jesus delivered all his redeemed. Look to Jesus Christ, and in a moment your sins have ceased to be. "With his stripes we are healed." Hallelujah!

It is most desirable to be so healed in soul as to stand the test of this present life. A person had a piece of diseased bone in the wrist ; it was taken out by the hospital surgeon, and the arm seemed perfectly healed. But when she began to work, the old pain returned, and it was evident

that the old mischief was there still, and that a part of the decayed bone remained. Thus some are saved, so they think, but it is only in seeming, for when they get into the world, and are tried with temptation, they are just the same as they used to be.

We want to have a salvation that will bear the test of sickness, and the strain of death, so that a man may lie back in his bed and say, "I do not fear to die : Jesus Christ has made me perfectly whole, and amongst the healed ones before his throne I shall shortly stand, and sing his praises world without end." Dear friends, could you die so? Have you a hope which will bear the light of your last hours? If you have not, do not let this day close until you have found it.

III. I close by saying, LET US GO WHERE TRUE HEALING IS TO BE HAD. It is quite certain that God is able to heal us of all our sins ; for He who created can restore. Whatever our diseases, nothing can surpass the power of omnipotent love. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus, then, the beloved Physician, is able and willing to meet the case of every one of us. His wounds are an unfailing remedy. Oh that you were willing to come to him and spread your case before him. Come at once. Even at this instant. Jesus certainly can meet your condition, though apart from him it may be utterly hopeless.

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TO-DAY! TO-DAY!



See page 2.

“WELL, you speak the truth; and, at a future time, I do intend to be religious; but I must have some more *spree* yet. I must enjoy life a while longer still.” So said the youthful, gay, and healthy R—, in reply to some serious expostulations which I had been addressing to him.

I had spoken to him of the claims of the Creator upon the creatures of his hand—of violations of the law met by the shedding of the Redeemer’s blood—of peace with God, which faith in him secures—of freedom from uneasy, anxious cares, and tormenting, terrifying fears—and of the genuine pleasant-

ness of wisdom's ways. He owned that what had been urged was true; yet still he smiled, and joked, and bid the peaceful message go its way. One concluding word of his, however, fell solemnly on my ear, and deeply affected my spirit. He exclaimed, whilst turning on his heel to leave me—"But I shall perhaps rue of this." My hurried answer, so far as I remember, was, "*Perhaps you will!*" That day was Friday.

I saw him again the next morning. We paced together one of the public walks outside the city. I dealt with him earnestly. My sympathies were awakened for him; and I used every argument, and put before him every moving consideration that was within my power at the time. Yet once more he answered me, that at a later period of his life he would attend to these concerns; but that he still meant to "have some more *spree* yet."

That day passed over—a second day followed—a third succeeded—and then, suddenly, the startling question was asked me, "Have you heard how poor R—— is to-day?" All that had recently passed between us now rushed upon my mind; and I said with much emotion, "No, indeed! what is the matter with him? I have not heard that anything has befallen him." "Have you not?" replied the inquirer. "Ah! he is dead, then, or all but dead of the small-pox." I sent to know the worst. Alas! it was even so! That very day—but three or four days after he had declared and re-declared that "at some future time he did intend to seek the Lord, but that he must enjoy *life* for some longer season, and have some more *spree* yet"—on that very third or fourth day, that previously hearty, healthy, gay, and thoughtless youth drew his last breath, and suddenly expired!

On the previous Friday, he joked, and put off serious thought, and purposed future years of jollity and gaiety. On the following morning, during the conversation already mentioned, he had informed me of his having experienced, during the previous night, some symptoms of indisposition. He had even told me that he had had passing suspicion of being threatened with an attack of the small-pox. He was better, however, he said, having used some active remedy; so that not the slightest apprehension had passed through my mind, at the time, of his being in any real danger from that most dangerous disease. I treated him as one in undoubted and vigorous health; and I pressed upon him rather the importance of a well-spent life, than that of being prepared for an early death.

But four or five more setting suns had sunk in the west, ere the small-pox had accomplished its fatal work; and, ere yet another week had fled, the disfigured, lifeless corpse of poor R—— had been committed "earth to earth, and dust to dust."

The funeral knell that pealed forth over the remains of poor R—— still speaks. It cries to all such as have ears to hear, "TO-DAY! TO-DAY! To-morrow is not yours! Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth! TO-DAY! TO-DAY!" "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Reader, I would speak to *you also* of the claims of your Creator—of the claims of the Redeemer—of peace with God through him—of a happy, peaceful, holy life—and a glorious consummation of our hopes in the presence of the blessed Saviour, at his appearing.

All else is vanity. The pleasures and pursuits of time and sense are

vain, and transient, and delusive. No one knows what true *life* is, until he lives to God. They who suppose that those only enjoy life who live in the lusts and enjoyments of the world, are grievously mistaken. Those who fancy that the commencement of a life of faith is the conclusion of one's days of happiness, are thoroughly deceived. The exact opposite is the truth. There is no true joy—no real pleasure—no substantial happiness apart from Jesus Christ—away from God. But to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as my own Saviour, and to know the pardon of sin through his blood, is indeed peace; it is indeed delight. To know God—to know him as my Father, my Friend, my Guide, my Helper, my GOD—this is indeed to live! Life begins only when faith first works by love. When first the heart of a poor, wretched, hell-affrighted sinner, be he young or old, rich or poor, well or ill, lays hold by faith on the holy, crucified, and risen Saviour, and thus enters into rest and certainty and eternal life—then for the first time does he begin to “live,” and to “enjoy life.” There is no rest of conscience, no ease of heart, no peace to the wicked.

Dear reader! God now puts in a claim to you through Jesus Christ. He claims that you, with hearty self-renunciation, and with admission of your lost estate, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He claims that you do come to receive his only begotten and well-beloved Son as your Saviour and your Lord—your righteousness and your life—your all-in-all, your “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” With him—with this salvation all is yours; without him, nothing is yours but sin, and death, and hell!

Receive him, and your sin is pardoned—your transgression is

forgiven—your dread iniquity is covered. Receive him in the full confidence of your heart, and God himself hath become *your* God, *your* Father; and you yourself have become an heir of glory—an inheritor of honour, immortality, and everlasting joys.

This is *life indeed!* All else that is great, and good, and truly to be longed for, will surely result therefrom. All that is wise, and rational, and noble—whatsoever things are “pure, and lovely, and of good report,” will assuredly be found here, and only here. Knowing the love of God to you, you will love him in return. “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Thus will you live in the very elements of true delight. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.” Here, then, is true joy, true happiness. Reader, is it not so? Oh, yes; you own it. Alas, so did poor R——. He owned that I had spoken the words of truth and soberness. But then, O reader, you perhaps are even now saying in your heart, as he said with the lip, that at some future time, some undefined, undetermined, and utterly uncertain day, you too will turn to God—will flee to Christ.

Dear reader, do not tempt God. TO-DAY! TO-DAY! Judge me not severe. What, if *to-night* you too should be attacked by some fierce and fatal malady? Do not flatter yourself that there is no danger. How know you that? What fatal malaria may not the next breath you draw convey into the most easily affected organs of your system? Thousands, as strong as you in the morning, have been laid low—are daily being laid low, before the eventide. What, indeed, is man's life? A frail and fickle thing! A vapour, a shadow, a

bubble, a dream, the flower of grass!

Reader, what say you? Stay! I warn you in my Master's name—with the solemn recollection of poor R——'s sudden, appalling summons resting on my spirit—*I warn you too.* Do you still repeat his words: "I will have some more *spree* yet; but perhaps I shall rue of this!" Alas, dear reader, *perhaps you will.*

I add one further word. All that I could learn of his conversation during his brief illness was this: that on one occasion, very shortly before his death, he had requested to be allowed to leave his bed, in order to kneel down to pray. All else is sealed until the great day that shall clear up all uncertainties.

Once more, dear reader, I cry to you, TO-DAY! TO-DAY! Oh, to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; as they did respecting whom of old God "sware in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest."

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those

virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and THE DOOR WAS SHUT.

"Afterward, came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I knew you not.

"Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."—MATT. xxv. 1-14.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATT. xi. 25-30.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1888.

JOHN VASSAR,
AMERICAN COLPORTEUR.



See page 3.

As a boy, John Vassar was wide-awake, affectionate, quick-tempered; and he was remarked as having the quality of despatching rapidly, and at once, whatever was given him to do. He had a bright, active mind, but had little education; three winters at an ordinary district school being all

he got before beginning work in a brickyard, in his twelfth year. He met with an accident that left him for life with a limping limb.

In his twenty-eighth year, he was persuaded to attend, "for once," a revival meeting; and that night proved to him something like Christ's

call to Matthew, "Follow me." All that week he could think of nothing but *sin*, and what sin deserves. But pardon and peace followed; so fully and clearly did he see the warrant of the chief of sinners to go to Him who "came into the world to save sinners," (1 Tim. i. 16,) that from that day his assured confidence in Christ was never darkened, even for an hour. As soon as Matthew was saved, he took care to introduce all his friends to Christ. And so it was noticed of John Vassar, that from the first, "fast as he got, he gave." He used to say that "it was as wrong to hoard grace, as to hoard gold;" and so on every occasion he sought to lead others to what he had found for himself. But his pastor at first thought him a sleepy hearer, for he observed him have the habit of putting down his head and not raising it till the sermon was finished. He was asked why he did this; and his reply was,—“I pray when you preach; and at every appeal you make I say, ‘Lord, send that home! Lord, send that home!’”

The American Tract Society of New York fixed on this man as their colporteur in the West; and never, perhaps, was there a more unwearied and warm-hearted labourer. It is told of him that in three months he had conversed with three thousand persons on the subject of their personal salvation; and his interviews were often singularly blessed. He came to the house of a lady and offered to show his book-basket, saying,—“The truth is, I am legs for Bunyan, Flavel, Baxter, and other such good men. They are all in the basket here.” And then he asked the lady if she loved the Lord Jesus. “I am a member of the church,” was the reply. “So am I,” said John Vassar; “but I fear that God will not take our church records. He counts the names recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” “You talk like my dear mother,” was

the response to this remark; “I trust I do love Jesus.” “Bless the Lord!” said John; “that makes us brother and sister.”

They called him “The Shepherd’s Dog” in some places, because he made it a rule to send every one he dealt with to the congregation of some pastor who cared for souls. Others called him “Uncle John,” as a familiar term of kindness and friendship. But he took care not to draw attention to himself, making it a rule never to tell any incident that would make his hearers think rather of the speaker’s shrewdness than of the Master’s message. He could come very close in his application of the truth without giving offence. “Are you a deacon in the church?” “Yes, I am.” “May I ask, is your wife a Christian?” “I am sorry to say that she is not.” “Have you any objection to my conversing with her?” “Not the least, not the least,” was the deacon’s reply, as he passed on with his load of hay. But the thought filled his mind, “How is this? Here is a stranger more concerned for the salvation of my household than I am. This won’t do,”—and he hastened home, just in time to hear John finish his earnest prayer. His wife was saved, and forty-two persons were added to the church in that place during the next six weeks.

He was sent to the army during the war against the Southernners; and in one division he was said to have conversed with several thousand persons, men and officers; and yet he was always fresh, never formal. Many singular incidents are related of him and by him. He liked to tell of a Christian young man in the camp, detailed to remain behind for some service, while a careless, unsaved companion was ordered on. Anxious for his comrade, and fearing that the engagement might be a serious one, this devoted youth offered to change places with his fellow, saying frankly

to him that he did so because he believed himself prepared for whatever might come, which the other was not. The offer was accepted; the battle was hot, and in the course of it this kind friend was hit three times, though not dangerously. He lived to see the fruit of his generous action, for the impression on his comrade was such that he sought and found the Saviour who had made his friend willing to die for him on the field, that he might not die before he had turned to the Lord.

He seemed to pray every hour of the day, and thus his words were always glowing. Sometimes the fruit did not appear for a season; and then, faith and prayer were owned. He could tell of having once entered the house of an infidel, leaving in it a Bible; for the wife let him know that there was none there, and had not been, all their married life. Soon after, the infidel husband came in, saw the Bible on the table, seized it in a rage, and, laying it on a pile of wood, lifted his axe and cut it through and through; then, lifting the two halves, he flung one of them to his wife, (who was a praying woman, but very timid,) saying, "You have a claim on all my property, there is your share;" the other half was pitched among a heap of tools. Some months after, the man was kept at home by the wintry weather, and, looking round for something to employ himself with, rummaged out from the box of tools the half of the Bible. It opened at the story of the Prodigal, which he began to read; but the narrative was unfinished, and his curiosity or interest had been aroused, so that he asked his wife if she had the other half of the book. He had never read that story before, but now he read it over and over. The Spirit of the Lord was there; and he who had so hated the very sight of the book that proclaimed salvation, became a humble disciple. The

Shepherd found the sheep that was lost.

"When fruit is altogether ripe, it drops readily from the bough," says some one; and so it was with John Vassar. At the close of December 1878, in his 65th year, the doctor who was attending him saw that death was near, and told him what he thought. That evening, all his family were around him. Gently and painlessly, but almost silently, he drew his last breath—only, before the end came, his lips moved, and his wife, bending over him, caught the word "Farewell," and then in a faint whisper, "Hallelujah." Thus he "fell asleep" in Jesus. There was no shout of victory; there was the calm, quiet resting on the Saviour's bosom, like the beloved John at the Supper in the Upper Room. The time for the triumphal, "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom," (2 Peter i. 11,) is the Resurrection Day, when the Lord Jesus takes his seat on the throne of glory, and all his redeemed around him.

Blessed and holy are they who have part in that Resurrection! And the time is near, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me." (Rev. xxii. 12.) Reader, on that day, "They that are wise shall shine as the firmament." And yet more shall belong to those who, like John Vassar, have "turned many to righteousness;" they shall "shine as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) But where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Do all believers realize the solemn fact that God's rule is to save men by the agency of their fellow-men? There is a sense in which that saying of a man of God is no more than true, viz. "*that God suspends the salvation of sinners unsaved on the exertion of those already saved.*" Men drawn to the shore out of the many waters are all expected to hasten to the

rescue of others. John Vassar lived under an almost overwhelming sense of this truth. He seemed to those who knew him best "a living fire." He lived every moment, (they said,) under the power of Peter's words, (Acts iv. 12 :) "Men and brethren, WE MUST BE SAVED!"—you, and I, and all our fellow-men. If he had a moment to spare while waiting for his dinner, he would open the Bible and feed his faith by some word of the Lord, and then send up strong cries in behalf of souls. When he came to a place quite new to him, he at once began to care for that people with might and main, giving them his whole heart, and time, and energies, often praying and working for them as if his very life depended on the issue.

An eternal hell, "*Everlasting punishment*," (Matt. xxv. 48,) is the doom of the unpardoned sinner. It is a truth from which Satan tries to draw off our attention, but neither forgetfulness nor unbelief will quench the endless flame. While those who are saved are too often almost callous in regard to the judgment that shall overtake the unforgiven, sinners die, and find out for themselves that the half was never told them. Let us lift up our voice as a trumpet, telling men that the Lord Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save the lost. You "MUST be saved," (Acts iv. 12,) and saved by him alone. He waiteth to be gracious, holding out to you salvation as a free gift. You may this hour be pardoned, made righteous, received into the family of God for ever, loved for evermore

by the God of love. *Everlasting* is on that deed of pardon.

But, fellow-sinner, there is not the shadow of a hope that by some other way than Christ's salvation sinners may possibly escape the wrath deserved. A calm thinker put the case thus: "Here is the problem: Salvation by Christ alone being God's method, find out how to save those who persist in rejecting it." Peter, in Acts iv. 12, with a voice of thunder proclaims, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

What wondrous labour that good man went through! He himself did not think so, but everybody else did. Tramp, tramp, tramp, from dawn to dark; seeking out souls, young and old. He had favourite hymns and favourite tunes; one of these was the hymn,—

"Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die,
Did he devote his sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

He had a tune of his own for it, and the deep feeling with which he sang the words seldom failed to move those who heard. The woman who thought it her duty not to take a tract from his hand, allowed him to sing; and before he had finished, the words,—

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe"—

completely subdued her; and often afterwards she would tell, "Oh, those drops of grief, those drops of grief! I couldn't get over them."

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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THE NEGLECTED BIBLE.



See page 2.

IN the month of February 18—, I called at the house of a family, which I had several times visited before. I knew them well, and my purpose was to make another attempt to do them good. Both husband and wife were given to intemperance, as all their acquaintance knew, and as their appearance but too plainly indicated.

Such they had been for many years. They had several small children, who were miserably clothed and repulsively dirty, appearing to be little cared for by either father or mother. They had one daughter, the eldest of their children, a very worthy girl, of about eighteen years, who was a seamstress, supporting

herself in a very respectable manner, and moving in respectable society. But she seldom or never went home. She once told me that she could not endure the pain of seeing her father, and especially her mother, in such a condition as they were; and when she had sometimes gone home to see them, after she left them, they only complained of her, and reproached her for her pride, because she had dressed herself in a decent manner, and because she would not consent to board at home any longer. Her mother had once requested me to induce her to return to them; but I had no heart to do it,—I could not attempt it,—I told the poor girl that in my opinion she was right in staying away.

On the morning to which I now allude, I knocked at the door, and the old woman opened it.

"I am glad to see you," said she, with a low voice and a very sullen look. I thought she might be ill, and inquired if she "was sick."

"I am well," was her brief and solemn reply.

In order to make her feel at ease, if possible, I seated myself upon a chair. It was covered with dust.

I made several attempts to lead her into some conversation, but it was all in vain,—she spoke only in muttered monosyllables. She scarcely noticed me at all.

Most sincerely I pitied her. I saw she appeared very wretched. I thought of her poverty, of her better days, of her youth, of her children, and of her sins and her soul. I resolved to soothe and console her for a moment, if I could, before I left her. Said I,—

"Mrs. B——, do you remember what I was speaking to you about when I was here the week before last?"

"Yes," said she.

"Have you thought of what I told you *then*?"

She gave no answer. Rising from my seat, and stepping towards the door, I said to her,—

"I am aware that I have called on you rather early in the morning, and I will not hinder you any longer now. If you will allow me, I shall be glad to call on you at another time."

I offered her my hand to bid her good-bye; but, instead of taking it, she placed her hand against the door to hinder me from opening it, saying, in a firm and solemn tone, "*Don't go.*"

"What can I do for you?" said I.

She did not answer.

"Mrs. B——, I wish you would tell me what makes you so unhappy. I should think you *would* tell me; I have always been a friend to you, and I think you have reason to confide in me. Tell me what is the matter,—what troubles you?"

"I am a *great sinner*!" said she, slowly and with deep solemnity.

"That is true, and a much greater sinner than you think."

"I am *such* a sinner!" said she, with a countenance as fixed and cold as marble.

"Yes, I am glad you have found it out; for now you will see the necessity of fleeing to that Saviour of whom I have spoken to you so many times, as your only ground of hope."

"I am *undone for ever*!" said she, with a look of cold, fixed despair.

"You *would* be, if there were no mercy in God, and no Christ Jesus to save. But God is able and willing to save all sinners who repent of sin and forsake it, and put all their trust in Christ."

"I have sinned a great while!"

"And God has borne with you a great while, simply because he is 'not willing that you should perish, but come to repentance.' Have you been praying to God to save you?"

"Yes; I prayed a long time last night, and I have been praying this morning till you came in."

"What did you pray *for*?"

"I prayed that God would forgive me."

"And do you think he will?"

"I am afraid not! I am a very great sinner."

"Jesus Christ, madam, is a very great Saviour. The *greatness* of your sins cannot ruin you, if you will but repent of them and forsake them, trusting to the great Redeemer of sinners for pardon, through his atoning blood. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin.'"

"*Will* God have mercy upon me now, after all I have done?" said she, for the first time lifting her eyes upon me, with a beseeching look.

"Yes, he will; he *says* he will. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'"

"I have been an awful sinner! I am a poor creature, unworthy of anything but God's curse!"

"True, all true, madam; but Christ is infinitely worthy, has borne the punishment due to sinners, and is willing to save you."

"I wish I could think so," said she, with the same fixed and despairing look.

"You *may* think so; God thinks so."

"There is no mercy for me any longer!"

"So *you* think, but God thinks differently. He thinks right, and you think wrong. Remember that he says, 'Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts.' And then, a little after, he says again, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts;' and goes on to say, 'for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts.' What does he mean by all this? You must let *him* tell what he will do. And he is telling in that very passage about the forgiveness which you say you cannot think

there is for you: 'Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.' But the sinner does not think so; and therefore God says it over again, as if he would beat it into the poor sinner's heart, 'Let him return unto our God, for he will *abundantly* pardon.'"

She shook her head as I went on. "You do not think so, but God does. I should like to show you that whole chapter. I want to read it to you. Have you got a Bible, Mrs. B——?"

Without uttering a word, she moved from the door to the other side of the room, and placed a chair beneath a high shelf. She then stepped upon the chair, and, reaching her hand upon the shelf, felt along till she found it, and took down her Bible. It was covered all over with dust, soot, and cobwebs, appearing as if it had not been handled for years. There she stood, motionless as a stone, with her eyes fixed upon her Bible, and I did not think it was best for me to say anything to her,—the dusty, cobwebbed Bible was speaking! The tears gushed from her eyes, and fell in quick drops upon its blackened board. She wiped off the tears and the dust, and extended to me the book—"There is my *Bible*!" said she.

I read and explained to her the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and attempted some further conversation with her, but she did not seem so much inclined to talk as to listen. At her request I prayed with her; and when I was about to leave her, I inquired,—

"How long have you been in this state of mind, Mrs. B——, feeling that you are such a sinner?"

"Since last night."

"What led you to feel so last night?"

"It was a little book that I read."

"What book was it?"

"*Sixteen Short Sermons.*"

"Whose sermons were they?"

"I don't know. I came across the book somewhere about the house. I don't know where it came from."

After this I often visited Mrs. B——, and had many interesting conversations with her. In one of these conversations she referred gently and humbly to her daughter. She said, "I should like to see her,—I have not seen her for many months; but I suppose it hurts the poor child's feelings to come home and find us—as we have been." I immediately went to see her daughter, and alone, and in as delicate a manner as I could, I told her of her mother's altered feelings, and suggested the propriety of her going to see her. She wept bitterly and long. It was almost impossible to comfort her at all; and before I left her, I found it was not mortification and shame about her mother, so much as her anxiety about her own salvation, which caused her distress. She had already heard of her mother's seriousness, and that was one of the causes of her own. But she did not go to see her mother. I pointed her to Christ as well as I could, and left her.

A few days after this I called upon the daughter again. I went to tell her of her mother's happy hope in Christ, which she had just expressed to me for the first time; and, to my no small joy and surprise, I found that the daughter had been led to the same sweet hope also. "Now," said she, the tears of joy coursing down her cheeks, "now, I can go to see *my mother*."

She did go. She opened the door,

and found the old woman alone. "My *mother*!" said she,—and she could say no more. In an instant they were in each other's arms, bathed in tears of joy.

That house and its inmates were very different in June from what they had been in February. Neatness and peace reigned where there had been filthiness, and clamour, and contention, through year after year of misery. The whole appearance of the woman was changed. She became dignified, lady-like, intelligent, easy in her manners; and, though always solemn, she was uniformly contented and happy.

Eight months after the time when I found this woman so suddenly awakened to a sense of her situation, by "a little book that she had read," both she and her daughter were received into the church together.

As long as I continued to be her pastor, Mrs. B—— always appeared to me to be a humble and happy Christian. There was uniformly about her an air of profound humility, and a cast of mournfulness too, whenever she adverted to her past life, or the time of her hopeful conversion. The remembrance of what she was seems to have thrown a shade over her character. Twenty years have passed away, and she still lives, enjoying the Christian confidence and affection of the church to which she belongs.

—Rev. Dr. I. S. Spencer.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1889.

WHICH WAY ARE YOU GOING?



At the New Year, we enter another stage of the life-journey. The future is untrodden, unknown. We would need a guardian angel to guide our steps. God has many waiting his call. He sometimes sends them in unexpected forms. Here is one of them. A little girl came home from church with her heart full of what she had heard, and at table in simplicity asked

her father, who was a godless man, whether he ever prayed. Thinking the question was not her own, he asked whether her mother or her aunt had put her up to it. "No," she replied, "but the minister told us that all good people pray, and those who do not pray are not going to heaven. Father, do *you* pray?" Annoyed and angry, he answered

roughly, "You and your mother and your aunt may go *your* way; and I will go mine." "Father," said the child, still with the most unconscious simplicity, "*which way are you going?*" The question pierced his heart. He was not on his guard with this preacher as with others, and the arrow went in. He felt he was in the way to death. He started from his chair, burst into tears, and began to pray for mercy. Neither man nor angel would have been so suitable a messenger to bring conviction to that sinner's heart, as his own little child.

All the world is a way. It is so broad that all the present generation of men travel abreast upon it. Like a river ever flowing is the stream of human life,—outward, downward, cold, and dark, and dead. The world is a lost world. We are of it at first, and perish with it, unless we come out from it, and have our life hid with Christ in God.

To the perishing a messenger has come, and the message he brings is life from the dead. Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. To us poor perishing sinners, the gospel is preached. Christ himself came to preach it. Never man spake like this man. Hear ye him. Of one thing we may be sure to begin with, he means good to us, and not evil. He gave himself to die for sinners. His coming was to save. Therefore the lost may turn to learn his will with the completest assurance that he is *for* them, and not against them.

To you, O men, he calls, and his voice is to the sons of men. And what does he say? "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." This is a hard saying, who can hear it? *Strait, narrow, few!* Ah, it is the same yet as in the days of his flesh,—many when they hear him, and take in some

glimmer of his meaning, go away and walk no more with him. Reader! will you also go away? To whom can you go? These are the words of eternal life.

The way down to destruction is broad and easy. It requires no exertion, no self-denial, no crucifying of nature's desires. You have only to lie like a leaf upon the stream, and without a thought or an effort you are carried down by it. A sinner does not find it difficult to sin.

But to turn from this broad path into the narrow way of life is difficult. It is against nature. It is not with the current of a man's natural affections to follow the Lamb in the way of life. The act is above nature, a man cannot do it; the act is contrary to nature, a man will not do it.

I dare not go about to tell you that it is easy. I cannot make a plainer gospel than I find here. I cannot call that easy which Jesus pronounced hard, I cannot call that wide which he declared to be narrow. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. Heaven and earth may pass away; but not one word of Jesus. His words are eternal, unchanging truth; and he has said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way."

The gate into life is *strait*. You may have felt yourself in a dream, in some outer place of darkness and danger. All was dark above, all slippery beneath, all enemies around. You were about to be swallowed up. You saw a lofty wall, within which is safety; but you are exposed without. At length you discover an entrance, and make for it with all your might. Your feet sink in miry clay. After a long struggle you reach it; but, alas, it is too narrow. You press with desperation in, but you are caught on every side. You begin to experience a sense of suffocation, and faint in despair. So the unconverted under wrath become

alarmed. They see danger, they dread hell, they cast a longing look to heaven. They would like to go in for safety, but there is no entrance that will admit the old nature. To put off the old man—to crucify the flesh, they are not willing, and yet they are afraid of being cast away.

There is no easier gospel for such a seeker than the gospel which Jesus preached: "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." We explain to every carnal mind, that in the act of approaching to God for salvation, either *he* must change, or *you*. *He* changeth not. In the act of coming, the old man must be put off. One's very self must be left behind. What tongue can tell what a sinner must let go, in the act of coming to Christ! What tearing and stripping there is when one passes from death unto life! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

The chief danger lies not in a determination to remain for ever without, but in a delaying to arise and press in. I think not many—perhaps scarcely any—of all our readers will be lost through a formed resolution never to agree to the Saviour's terms; but I do fear that many may be lost through a delay in actually closing with them. There is some disease in a limb of your body. It is local in its character, and may be cut out, but of deadly nature, and, if let alone, will bring you to the grave. You know the state of the case. You know that your life depends on the severance of the infected limb; but you shudder at the prospect of the operation. You know it must be done, but you do not like to do it. If you linger long, you may discover that the poison has spread to the vitals, and that life cannot be saved now.

Reader, a grievous disease is in your immortal being. You must consent to put off the part, if you are to enter

into life with Jesus. To know and confess that it must be done, will not save you. To go about sad all your days because it must be done, will not save you. Nothing will save you but *doing it*. Put it off. There is the strait gate. In you cannot go without crushing off your very self. And there is no time to be lost. If it be not now, it may be never.

But the "consolations of God" lie even in this awful word, and shine distinctly through its terrors. Let us count up the mercies that mingle with the judgments there.

1. *There is a gate and a way.* When the window of heaven is opened to display a terror, "the gate is strait," we see within, and read the mercy, "there is a gate." In Christ the centre, and in all the Scriptures, which are light-beams from that blessed sun, mercy and judgment meet. In the very act of telling sinners, for terror, that the gate is strait, he lets it out, for comfort to the convicted, that there is a gate. While the express announcement is, "Your lusts must be excluded," the implied intimation is, "Yourself may go in."

The way is not easy to the carnal mind; but, there is a way. This is a Father's voice. It is rough, as befits it when the child is prodigal. The sound is forbidding, — *strait, narrow, few*; but the word forbids the entrance only of that which defileth. A Father's heart is yearning beneath this stern aspect. He will have the prodigal purified; but he will have the wanderer restored. He will keep back the filth, and rags, and evil employments, and associates, —but he will take in his child.

The gate is narrow. You and your pleasures cannot go together to heaven. But the gate is not shut. The path is yet open—yet there is room. Whosoever will, let him come: here is consolation to an awakened soul.

2. The gate of heaven is not *opened by the powerful, but found by them that seek.*

Although the gate is strait, and the verse speaks of its straitness, its straitness is not, it seems, the ultimate reason why so few go in. It is not written, "few there be that can *force through*," but "few there be that *find* it."

The first thought of a sinner, when he begins to fear, is to return to God's favour by trying to make himself righteous. The entrance that way is shut. Outside the brazen wall of wrath are gathered the multitudes in all lands and times, who strive to be their own saviours. One will give ten thousand rivers of oil; another will give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul; the Papist will do penance, and the Protestant make many prayers. It is all in vain. There is no gate there, and you can never force one. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Christ has made the way. Christ *is* the way. To get and accept from a crucified Saviour the full and free pardon of all sin, and the adoption of children;—this love, lavished on you first by God, when you accept and feel it, enables you to love him back again. But this is an entrance into his favour by Christ's merits alone, and not by any righteousness of yours. You are in now; but you have not opened a gate; you found a gate open, and simply entered in. It is not, *make* a way, but simply, *seek* a way that Christ has made.

3. Though the gate be strait, and the way narrow, it *leadeth unto life.*

If there is pain in the regeneration, there is gladness in beginning a new life. It is a sweet thing to live. It is pleasant to the eyes to behold the sun. Like birth-pangs is the entrance; but life is within, a life hid with Christ in God, a life that will never die. "We went through fire and water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." (Ps. lxvi. 12.)

4. *There is room within, and a welcome to all.* Be of good cheer, brother. Great is the number of the Lord's redeemed who have already come to Zion, but greater is his heaven, and his *heart*. Yet there is room. This voice of the Lord, coming forth from the unseen eternity, might kindle blessed hope in dark, despairing souls. He gave himself. He gave a price sufficient to redeem a world; he is the way in. He has prepared the mansions. It is the coming of a multitude that is the satisfying of his soul. His yearning desire is to seasons and daughters coming like doves to their windows, coming like the dew of the morning, or the sand of the sea. He would that none of human kind were lost.

Friend, forward in life you must go, whether you will or not. You cannot stand still. You have entered another year in time; you do not know whether you will close it in time or eternity. Your journey will one day be cut short. It concerns you to be now in the way that leadeth unto life, so that the last step of this life's journey would be the step into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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ARE YOU FORGIVEN?



St. Paul preaching at Antioch.

READER, do you see the question which stands at the head of this page? It is just possible you may not understand its meaning. Perhaps you may think, "Whom have I injured?—Whom have I defrauded?—Whom have I wronged?—Whose confidence have I forfeited?—What need have I of forgiveness?"

I answer, it is not an earthly forgiveness I am asking about, but a heavenly one. I do not inquire whether you are forgiven in the sight of men, but whether you are forgiven in the sight of God. The question I desire to press home on your conscience is simply this, "Are you a pardoned soul?"

I. *Let me show you, first, your need of forgiveness.*

All men need forgiveness, because all men are sinners. He that does not know this, knows nothing in religion. It is the very A B C of Christianity, that a man should know his right place, and understand his deserts.

We are *all great sinners*. Sinners we were born, and sinners we have been all our lives. We take to sin naturally from the very first. No child ever needs schooling and education to teach it to do wrong. No devil or bad companion ever leads us into such wickedness as our own hearts. And the wages of sin is death. We must either be forgiven, or lost eternally.

We are *all guilty sinners* in the sight of God. We have broken his holy law. There is not a commandment in all the ten which does not condemn us. If we have not broken it in deed, we have in word; if we have not broken it in word, we have in thought and imagination,—and that continually. Tried by the standard of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, there is not one of us that would be acquitted. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, so after this comes the judgment. We must either be forgiven, or perish everlastingly.

Reader, you may not perhaps like what I am saying. You think I am going much too far. But mark well what I am about to say next, and then consider whether I have not used the words of soberness and truth.

What, then, I ask, is *the life of the best Christian* amongst us all? What is it but one great career of shortcomings? "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles. vii. 20.) "In many things," says the Apostle James, "we offend all." (James iii. 2.)

And *what is the best action* that is ever done by the very best of Chris-

tians? What is it after all but an imperfect work, when tried on its own merits? The eyes of men may see no fault in it, but weighed in the balance of God, it would be found wanting; and viewed in the light of heaven, it would prove full of flaws.

And then, *what is the Lord God*, whose eyes are on all our ways, and before whom we have one day to give account? "Holy, holy, holy," is the remarkable expression applied to him by those who are nearest to him. (Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8.) It sounds as if no one word could express the intensity of his holiness. One of his prophets says, "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." (Habak. i. 13.) Reader, what is any one of us but a miserable sinner in the sight of such a God as this?

Surely there is but one conclusion to be arrived at,—we are all great sinners, and we all need a great forgiveness.

Sin is a burden, and must be taken off. Sin is a defilement, and must be cleansed away. Sin is a mighty debt, and must be paid. Sin is a mountain standing between us and heaven, and must be removed. Happy is that mother's child amongst us that feels all this! The first step towards heaven is to see clearly that we *deserve hell*. There are but two alternatives before us,—we must either be forgiven, or be miserable for ever.

See, too, how little many persons know of the design of Christianity, though they live in a Christian land. They fancy they are to go to church to learn their duty, and hear morality enforced, and for no other purpose. They have yet to learn that the leading mark of Christianity is the *remedy* it provides for sin. This is the glory and excellence of the gospel. It meets man as he really is. It takes him as it finds him. It goes down to the level to which sin has brought him, and offers to raise him up. It tells

him of a remedy equal to his disease,—a great remedy for a great disease,—a great forgiveness for great sinners.

Reader, I ask you to consider these things well, if you have not considered them before. It is no light matter whether you know your soul's necessities or not. It is a matter of life and death. Try, I beseech you, to become acquainted with your own heart. Sit down and think quietly what you are in the sight of God. Oh, that you might learn to pray Job's prayer, "Make me to know my transgression and my sin." (Job xiii. 23.) Oh, that you might see this great truth, that, until you are *forgiven*, your Christianity has done nothing for you at all!

II. *Let me point out to you, in the second place, the way of forgiveness.*

Granting for a moment that you want pardon and forgiveness, what ought you to do? Whither will you go? Which way will you turn? Everything hinges on the answer you give to this question.

Will you turn to *ministers*, and put your trust in them? They cannot give you pardon: they can only tell you where it is to be found.

Will you turn to *sacraments and ordinances*, and trust in them? They cannot supply you with forgiveness, however diligently you may use them. By sacraments faith is confirmed and grace increased, in all who rightly use them. But they cannot justify the sinner. They cannot put away transgression. You may attend a daily service regularly, but if you think to establish a righteousness of your own by it, in the slightest degree, you are only getting further away from God every day.

Will you trust in your own *works and endeavours*, your virtues and your good deeds, your prayers and your alms? They will never buy for you an entrance into heaven. They will never pay your debt to God. They are all imperfect in themselves, and

only increase your guilt. There is no merit or worthiness in them at the very best.

Will you trust in your own *repentance and amendment*? You are very sorry for the past. You hope to do better for time to come. You hope God will be merciful. Alas! if you lean on this, you have nothing beneath you but a broken reed. The judge does not pardon the thief because he is sorry for what he did. To-day's sorrow will not wipe off the score of yesterday's sins.

Where, then, must a man go for pardon? Where is forgiveness to be found? Listen, reader, and by God's help I will tell you. There is a way both sure and plain.

That way is, simply to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. It is to cast your soul, with all its sins, unreservedly on Christ,—to cease completely from any dependence on your own works or doings, either in whole or in part,—and to rest on no other work but Christ's work, no other righteousness but Christ's righteousness, no other merit but Christ's merit, as your ground of hope. Take this course, and you are a pardoned soul. "Through this man," said Paul at Antioch, "is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.)

The Lord Jesus Christ, in great love and compassion, has made a full and complete satisfaction for sin, by his own death upon the cross. There he offered himself as a sacrifice for us, and allowed the wrath of God, which we deserved, to fall on his own head. For our sins he gave himself, suffered, and died,—the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty,—that he might deliver us from the curse of a broken law, and provide a complete pardon for all who are willing to receive it. And by so doing, as Isaiah says, he has *borne* our sins,—as John the Baptist

says, he has *taken away* sin,—as Paul says, he has *purged* our sins, and *put away* sin,—and, as Daniel says, he has *made an end of sin*, and *finished* transgression. (Isa. liii. 11; John i. 29; Heb. i. 3, ix. 26; Dan. ix. 24.)

Christ, in one word, has purchased a full forgiveness, if you and I are willing to receive it. He has done all, paid all, suffered all that was needful to reconcile us to God. He has provided a garment of righteousness to clothe us. He has opened a fountain of living waters to cleanse us. He has removed every barrier between us and God the Father, taken every obstacle out of the way, and made a road by which the vilest may return. All things are now ready, and the sinner has only to believe and be saved, to ask and receive, to wash and be clean.

And faith, simple faith, is the only thing required, in order that you and I may be forgiven. That we will come to Jesus as sinners with our sins,—trust in him,—rest on him,—lean on him,—confide in him,—commit our souls to him,—and, *forsaking all other hope, cleave only to him*,—this is all and everything that God asks for. Let a man only do this, and he shall be saved.

This is the only doctrine which will ever bring peace to an uneasy conscience, and rest to a troubled soul. A man may get on pretty well without it so long as he is asleep about his spiritual condition. But once let him awake from his slumber, and nothing will ever calm him but the blood of atonement, and the peace of Christ.

And now, let me put a home question to every one who reads this paper. It shall be short and plain, but it is all-important—"Are you forgiven?"

Bring the whole subject to bear upon your own heart, and ask yourself, "Am I forgiven? Either I am, or I am not. Which of the two is it?"

You believe, perhaps, that Christ died for sinners, and that he offers a pardon to the most ungodly. But are you forgiven *yourself*? Have you yourself laid hold on Christ by faith, and found peace through his blood? What profit is there to you in forgiveness, except you get the benefit of it? Except you lay hold for your own soul, you will be as surely lost as if there was no forgiveness at all.

Reader, if ever your sins are to be forgiven, it must be now,—now in this world, if they are to be found blotted out when Jesus comes again. Your sins must be laid on him by faith. His righteousness must be laid on you. His blood must be applied to your conscience, or else your sins will meet you in the day of judgment, and sink you into hell. Oh, reader, how can you trifle when such things are at stake? How can you be content to leave it uncertain whether you are forgiven? Surely that a man can make his will, insure his life, give directions about his funeral, and yet leave his soul's affairs in uncertainty, is a wonderful thing indeed.

BISHOP RYLE.

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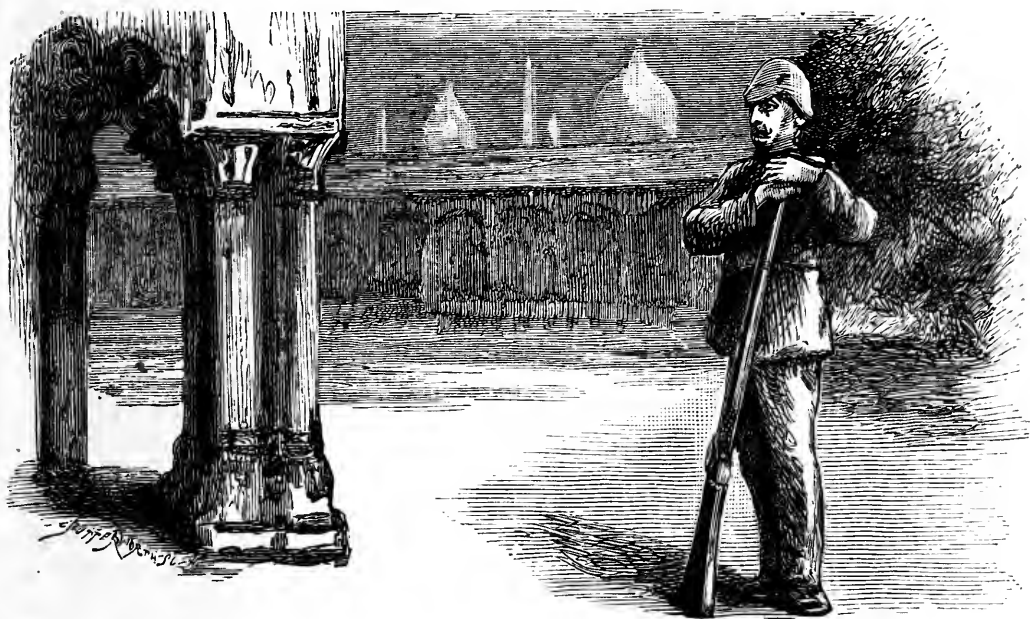
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ON GUARD AT MIDNIGHT!



"ON guard at midnight"—such were the words at the head of a soldier's letter to me; and I have thought these four words would form an appropriate title to the facts I am about to relate.

"WATCH!" was our Lord's command. The attitude of the Christian should be one of watchfulness—against temptation; against his own

deceitful heart; against the combined powers of evil and the snares of the world. Watchfulness and prayer, (1 Pet. iv. 7,)—these are the two weapons wherewith we are to fight our daily battle. And thus are all Christian soldiers to stand prepared, clothed in the armour of God. (Eph. vi. 13.) Let us ever bear in mind that we stand exposed

on every side, vulnerable at every point, unless we be "on guard."

On this subject the history of Lance-Corporal A—— affords a sad illustration of weakness through unwatchfulness.

The little Christian knowledge he had was acquired in early life at the Sunday school; after that for several years he never entered a church, but grew up to manhood without a thought of God or a care for his soul. To quote his own words: "In 186— I enlisted. A man named F——, who had backslidden from God, but had returned, took me with him to chapel, and introduced me to some Christian people. I became an altered man in morals, but thought I must be saved through my own works. I could not and would not see Christ's way of salvation. I got no rest till I heard that I had nothing to do myself, but to let Jesus do everything. I did so. I cast myself on him. I enjoyed the full presence of God's Spirit within my soul. I beheld his hand in nature, in the flowers, leaves, etc.,—all seemed to speak to me of the power and love of God. But in rejoicing I ceased to watch, and consequently I *fell*. Yes, I miserably fell! And to try and drown thoughts of the happy past, I took to drinking, and learned to love it. At —— some of the men took me to the Soldiers' Home. There a lady spoke to me, and quoted Hosea xiv. 4, to show that God wanted to save me. I was in great grief for sin, and earnestly prayed God to take me and keep me. I confessed my sins with a broken and a contrite heart."

But, alas! he was not "on guard." Again, through the force of evil example, he fell into sin, and for a year continued an alien from God. He wrote to me in deep melancholy: "I thank you for trying to lead me to the cross of Christ for pardon.

It is all owing to unwatchfulness that I have fallen. Oh, what a load of sin is pressing me down! I am unable to extricate myself from the mire. One time I could sin without thought of repentance, but now it nearly drives me to despair. Surely I shall be doubly condemned, for I know what is right, and I do it not. What shall I do?"

Another letter was as follows:—"I thank you from a grateful heart for the kind admonitions and gentle pleadings contained in your letter. You told me to look out of my deceitful heart to Christ. I have done so; and I have a very deep sense of my sinfulness, and total inability to do one good thing of myself. I have conquered drink after a hard battle, and now I *hate* it. But I am a very inconsistent man, and always afraid of bringing reproach on the cause of Christ in an unguarded moment. My motto should be, 'Watch and pray;' may God help me to do so! Please continue to write to me, for your letters are so refreshing to my soul. I read them over and over again, and thank God for sending me such a mercy as yourself to lead me on the way. I pray continually for your efforts to show poor sinners the way of salvation. It will cheer you to know that God has blessed your efforts on my behalf. The cloud has passed away, and all that remains is extreme sorrow for my base ingratitude towards my loving Saviour. I've nothing to offer to God for his mercy, but the entire surrender of self. I've made that offering, and I pray that I may live as one of his blood-bought ones. I am indeed growing in grace. I find great happiness from those three words: '*He is able.*' All I've to do is to let him perfect his good work in me."

The writer of these letters is now a steady, consistent, earnest Christian.

The history of Private B—— is a very remarkable one.

He was deprived of a mother's care at an early age, and from boyhood roamed the world by land and sea, learning more and more of sin, but rarely meeting with the good and pure. Thus he grew up a slave to Satan and every form of vice. But the Spirit of God spake to his heart, and awakened in him consciousness of guilt. His state of misery was fearful. "I plunged into every sin to drown thought," he said; "and many a time I was tempted to end my miserable life, just to get free from the prickings of conscience, to have the truth of eternity put beyond all doubt." Satan deluded him into the belief that he could be at rest—annihilated, perhaps—after death, and that there would be no more tossings to and fro in wretchedness. At midnight, at the hour when the weary are sleeping, the wicked are revelling, some are watching and praying, and others are falling deeper and deeper into sin, this soul was contemplating rushing into the presence of his Maker and his Judge by his own act; but the Holy Spirit strove with him, and arrested the suicidal hand.

I had been requested by his commanding officer—an earnest Christian—to write to Private B——, and accordingly did so. His reply was as follows:—"I am very grateful to you for the kindness you have shown to a soldier. I have long been in a very uncertain frame of mind about my eternal state, and I've nearly given up all hopes. I do not think it possible that such a great sinner can be saved." He was pointed to Jesus, who will not cast out any that come to him. (John vi. 37.) There was a struggle between God and Satan in his soul, but the Saviour finally won the victory.

I leave him to tell the tale in his own words. "The words that I

heard at Major ——'s Bible class occupied my thoughts all the night. I thought, too, of all you said in your letters, which I have learnt off by heart, and I read all the chapters in the Bible which you laid down for me; and then all at once the scheme of salvation burst upon me, and I seemed to understand what led our Saviour to die for such as me, instead of leaving me to the fate I deserved. This morning I opened my Bible and felt I was not forgotten,—felt that I might still gain a place in heaven through the merits of my Saviour. The lowest place is thousands of miles above what I deserve. . . . I am sorely tempted. It is so hard; you can't think to change all at once from a ringleader in sin to a quiet, God-fearing Christian. Please do pray for me. It is so difficult to withstand the temptations that beset a soldier; but I am 'on guard' now. I wish, dear lady, I had heard from you years ago; my defaulter sheets in heaven would not have looked so black. Every time I pray, your name is sent up to heaven as the means of my eternal salvation."

B—— is still in earnest, striving to follow in the footsteps of his Master.

Another illustration of the subject is the case of Private K——.

He was known at Aldershot as the worst specimen of vice,—an embodiment of all the sins. One week-day evening, "having nothing better to do," he sauntered into the North Camp Mission Church. A sermon was preached on Isa. liii. 6. The forcible and earnest words went home with the Spirit's power to K——'s soul. He became miserable, rushed out of church, and drowned thought in drink. For some days his conduct was so outrageous that he was put into prison. While there the words of the sermon haunted him; but he had no light to guide him to Jesus. He was only con-

scious of his deep, hell-deserving guilt, and he desired to hide himself from God, to fly away from himself. With some vague idea of rest in eternity, he attempted to hang himself, but his design was prevented. With a desperate effort he escaped from prison, but was arrested, and this time endured a longer confinement. But from the time he came forth to the time he set foot in India, he indulged in every sin, and sank lower and lower. Still, (to use his own words,) "That sermon stuck to me; I could not put it out of my head. Do what I would, there it was; and the words haunted me to Meerut, and gave me no rest till I was driven to my knees. Then I poured out my soul in prayer; and I do believe God heard me and pardoned me. But the power of sin was strong over me. I didn't watch against it, but went in the way of evil companions, and fell."

There was one ray throughout it all,—the Spirit of God gave him no peace day or night, but incessantly strove with him. Happily K— fell in with some good men who persuaded him to sign the pledge. "Before doing so, however," he says, "I made a rush at a pot of ale, and drank it at a draught. I then said to my old companions, 'I'm going to turn over a new leaf, so good-bye to you all!'" But the force of bad habits clung to him, and threw him back again into old paths of vice. He was often tempted by his old comrades to go in the way of evil, and he wrote to me as follows from Lucknow:—"I was being put upon

by my fellow-comrades at the time I received your letter, and was much cast down. But, thank God, your letter showed me I must be done with the old life. It told me I should look right away to Christ. It was like the oil of gladness to my soul. I am thankful to say I'm trusting in Jesus, the Captain of my salvation. I've been a very crooked chap, but, thank God, I'm on the right road at last."

This man is now maintaining a consistent Christian walk. He is a Sabbath school teacher, and a regular visitor among the sick men in hospital.

Some people think that it is almost impossible for a soldier to be a consistent Christian. The extracts from these letters contradict such a statement. They show that if a man is "on guard" against temptation, by the grace of God he can live as holy a life in the army as in any other calling. "Our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.) The sad cases of backsliding have always been the result of the neglect of our Lord's injunction, "Watch and pray." If a Christian in the world becomes self-reliant, and ceases to be on the watch-tower, he is liable to fall. There are the same weapons, the same armour, the same Captain for the soldier and the citizen. But if one among the chosen twelve, one of the select three, around the sacred person of our Lord, could easily deny him and backslide, how much ought we to profit by the lesson, and learn in humility to "watch and pray"!

M. L. S. H.

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ONE WHO FOUND MERCY.



I WAS earnestly requested to visit a young man who, it was feared, was sinking in consumption. I asked in what state of mind he was. "Sullen," was the reply, "and unapproachable; very averse to spiritual conversation." I went to see him as desired, and began by asking kindly after his state of health. I then went on to speak of Christ and salvation. He stopped

me at once. "Do not torment me," he said, "before the time." Then, observing the astonishment expressed in my countenance, he added, "I do not speak from profaneness, but from despair. I have tried religion, and can make nothing of it. Do leave me alone."

He went on to say, "When I first became seriously ill, a kind friend

told me that I must *repent*. I asked what repentance was. He said that it was sorrow for sin, love to God, and a sincere desire to serve him. I asked him how I was to obtain such a grace. He said that it was the gift of God, and that I must pray for it. I set myself to do so in right earnest, for I was afraid of going to hell. I got a book of prayers, and made use of them, and of the prayers of the church, many times a day."

"For what were you praying all this time?" I asked. "That God would have mercy on me," was his answer, "give me faith and true repentance, and forgive me my sins. My spiritual adviser commended my diligence, and said that God would certainly hear me; and I had got so accustomed to spiritual exercises and devotional language, that I really hoped that he had heard me, and that I was a changed man. Shall I tell you how I was undeceived? I felt better for about a week, and thought that I was going to recover. And with my better health all my old tastes revived. Seeing a sporting magazine lying on my table, I could not conceal from myself the interest with which I regarded it, and the feeling of nausea with which I looked at the Bible and prayer-book at its side. It was a moment of terrible agony. 'I am utterly unchanged,' I said to myself; 'as far from repentance as ever. Were I restored to health again, I should return to my old ways. I shall pray no more.' I added, with bitter tears; 'it profits me nothing.' On this resolve I have acted ever since. It was on this account that I stopped you when you began to speak. I will hear no more about repentance; why should I? *I cannot repent.*"

I said quietly and affectionately, "I was not going to speak about repentance at present."

"Not going to speak about repent-

ance!" he said. "Of what, then, were you going to speak?"

"Of the infinite love of God," I replied, "and his forgiving mercy."

"Yes," he rejoined impatiently; "his love to the *believer*, his mercy to the *penitent*. I have told you already that I do not belong to that favoured class."

"You mistake me," I replied; "I would speak of God's love to the *ungodly*, and his mercy to the *sinner*."

"You do not mean to say that God loves me *as I am*?" he said.

"I do indeed mean to say so," was my solemn and earnest response. "Our Lord Jesus says that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.' (John iii. 16.) And his apostle has told us its character, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness.' (1 John v. 19.) You cannot be worse than *of the world*, and *lying in wickedness*. Neither can you be worse than *dead in sin*. But St. Paul says, 'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins.' (Eph. ii. 4, 5.) Once more, you cannot be worse than *an enemy of God*. But Christ says to his people, 'Love your enemies, . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. v. 44, 45.) So, then, if you belong to the world—if with that world you have hitherto lain in wickedness—if you are dead in sin and God's enemy—you are of those whom God loves."

He looked at me with surprise. "And what," he asked, "about God's pardoning mercy—how is it to be obtained?"

"Forgiving love," I replied, "is what is shown in the cross of Jesus. He 'suffered, the just for the unjust.' (1 Peter iii. 18.) 'He died for the *ungodly*.' 'While we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us.' (Rom. v. 6, 8.) The announcement of his death is not to the believing

and penitent, but to the sinner, that he may believe; and that believing, he may repent. And so it is with regard to forgiveness through his blood. It is God's message to the sinner—his message to *you* now. Obtained for us already by a Saviour's death, and proclaimed in the blessed gospel, it waits only *your acceptance* to make it *yours* for ever."

He said, "I always thought that God could not love me till I was brought to a better state; and that made me so anxious to repent."

"There," I replied, "was just your mistake. God loves you now. If you want to know how much, the cross will tell you."

When next I saw him, he exclaimed, "What you said when last here has never left my mind. When I turn my eyes in that direction, I see a bright light, and it enlarges on my vision. But there are many difficulties. If God loves us as we are, what is the use of repentance?"

"Repentance, my friend," I replied, "is return to God. Had the prodigal son been told, whilst living among the swine, that his father still loved him and longed to welcome him back, would he have said, 'Then I need not return'?"

"Most certainly not!" replied the sick man; "he would have found in such a message every possible encouragement to return."

"And so it should be with you," I said; "the assurance of God's love contained in the blessed gospel should encourage you to return to him with your whole heart. You remember that beautiful hymn,—

'Just as I am—thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine—yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.'

"What is the meaning of such language?" he asked earnestly. "What is it to return to God?"

"It is to look to him," I said, "as the object of our entire confidence and affection—to surrender our hearts to him as our Father. The blessed gospel reveals his fatherly name, and declares his paternal grace; and if you believe what it reveals, your heart will be thus surrendered to him."

He caught at the word "believe." "Tell me about faith," he said. "What is it?"

"Faith," I replied, "may be described both negatively and positively. It is not making God a liar; it is giving him credit for speaking the truth. (1 John v. 9, 10.) When he says that he loves us, that Christ died for us, that there is forgiveness through his precious blood, it is believing that these things are so because he says so."

"Is that all?" he eagerly inquired.

"Yes," I answered, "it is all."

He seemed very much astonished. "I always thought," he said, "that faith was some good quality, and that when I was possessed of it God would love me."

"There," I replied, "was again your mistake. Faith is simply the belief of what God is to you already, and of what he has done for you in his dear Son."

"Then you mean to say that God looks upon me now in love; that his message to me now is one of forgiving mercy."

"Yes," I answered; "look to him who loves you, and be saved. (Isa. xlv. 22.) Hear his word of mercy, and your soul shall live." (Isa. lv. 3.)

He seemed lost in thought for a while; then, looking up, he said, "How is it, then, that any perish?"

"You have your answer," I replied, "from Psalm lxxxi. 11, '*Israel would none of me.*' Men will not have Christ's mercy,—they shut him out; and to be far from him is to perish. To receive Christ into the heart is salvation. And because

faith in God's love to us opens our hearts to him, we are saved by faith."

A few days afterwards I was sent for. He received me with a beaming countenance. "I really think," he said, "that I have found repentance." On being asked to tell me all, he continued, "As I lay awake last night, I fell into a pleasing train of thought. All that you had told me of God came before my mind, and I felt enabled to believe it. His love appeared a blessed reality. I thought on all he had done,—how he had sent his dear Son to bear my sins, how he had raised him from the dead for me and glorified him, how he had given to me eternal life in him,—and my heart was melted. For the first time in my life I felt what real prayer was; ay, and praise too. My heart sang, 'O thou my soul, bless God the Lord;' I called on him as a Father, I poured out before him the grateful heart of a child. I then began to review my past life. I saw that whilst God had been loving me, I had been hating him; whilst he had been preparing salvation for me, I had been trampling on him. And oh, how I loathed—how I now loathe myself! And when I look at the cross, and see him still pacified towards me, I cannot open my mouth because of my shame." He paused from excess of emotion. "Oh, sir," he said, "what is this feeling?"

"My friend," said I, grasping his hand with indescribable joy and thankfulness, "it is REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE." (Acts xi. 18.)

"Why did I not find this repent-

ance before," he asked; "when I prayed for it so earnestly?"

"Because you did not know what produced it. You were seeking repentance to lead to goodness. The Bible speaks of the goodness of God leading to repentance. (Rom. ii. 4.) God's blessed Spirit has now taught you to believe in this goodness; and the repentance has followed."

The sequel is soon told. No cloud was after this permitted to darken his emancipated spirit. "Hear a dying man's testimony," he said to the members of his family as they stood around his bed: "it is nothing to die when Christ is with us." To me his last words were, "I die rejoicing in the mercies of my God and Saviour."

Many persons imagine that repentance and faith are some difficult attainments which are first to be realized, and that *then* God will love them and look on them in mercy. But who shall tell them that *their repentance and faith* are sufficient for this desired end?

Understand, beloved reader, *you cannot repent at all* till you know that God loves you *not as a penitent*, but *as a sinner*; that the cross is the expression of that love; and that through the blood of that cross which has met all the demands of God's righteousness, you have free access to God as a Father. Such goodness, if you will believe it, will melt your heart, and teach you to repent indeed. It will sustain your heart in the solemn hour of death; and when death is past, it will remain your all-satisfying portion for ever.

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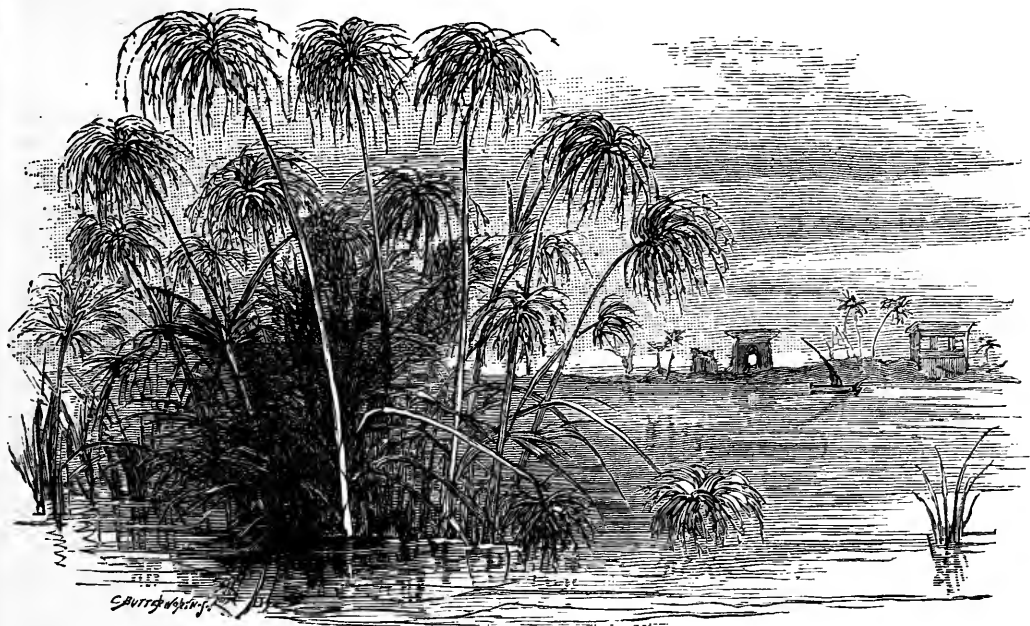
MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1889.

THE HOPE OF THE HYPOCRITE.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish."—JOB viii. 11-13.



THE rush shall, by God's grace, teach us a lesson of self-examination. Bildad, the Shuhite, points it out to us as the picture of a hypocrite.

I. First, then, THE HYPOCRITE'S

PROFESSION: WHAT IS IT LIKE? It is here compared to a rush growing in the mire, and a flag flourishing in the water. This comparison has several points in it.

1. *The rapidity with which it grows.*

True conversions are often very sudden. But the after-growth of Christians is not quite so rapid and uninterrupted: they cannot always rejoice; their life is chequered; they are emptied from vessel to vessel, and are acquainted with grief. Not so the hypocrite: once having made a profession of being converted, things generally go very smoothly with him. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." They are strangers to lamentations over inbred corruption. The hypocrite can always pray well, and sing well; he meets no hindrances in coming to a mercy-seat, has no groans to mingle with his formal songs. The backs of living men ache under their loads, but a steam-engine, having no living sensibilities, knows no pains; a horse may stumble from weariness, but a locomotive never; even so the mechanical professor goes on and on and on at an even rate, when living souls enjoy no such perfect equanimity. It is an ill sign, dear friend, if thou never hast to search thy heart with deep anxiety lest thou shouldst be deceived.

2. The rush is of all plants one of the most *hollow and unsubstantial*. It looks stout enough to be wielded as a staff, but he that leaneth upon it shall most certainly fall. So is it with the hypocrite; he is fair enough on the outside, but there is no solid faith in Christ Jesus in him, no real repentance on account of sin, no vital union to Christ Jesus. He can pray, but not in secret, and the essence and soul of prayer he never knew.

3. The hypocrite is very like the rush for *its bending properties*. If the wind blows from the north, he bends to the south; and if the wind blows from the south, he bends to the north. Only grant the rush one thing, that he may keep his place, and he will cheerfully bow to all the

rest. The hypocrite will yield to good influences if he be in good society. "Oh yes, certainly, certainly, sing, pray, anything you like." With equal readiness he will yield to evil influences if he happens to be in connection with them. "Oh yes, sing a song, talk wantonness, run into gay society, attend the theatre, take a turn with the dice; certainly, if you wish it; 'When we are at Rome we do as Rome does.'" Anything to oblige anybody is his motto. If it be most respectable to call a thing black, well, then, it is black; if it will pay better to call it white, well, then, it is not so very black, in fact it is rather white, or white altogether, if you like to call it so. Give me the man who, when it comes to be a matter of right and wrong, will rather die than deny his faith.

4. Yet again, the bulrush has been used in Scripture as a picture of a hypocrite, from its habit of *hanging down its head*. "Is it to hang thy head like a bulrush?" asks the prophet, speaking to some who kept a hypocritical fast. Pretended Christians seem to think that to hang down the head is the very index of a deep piety. To look piously miserable—to speak in a wretched tone of voice—to be constantly lamenting the wickedness of the times—to see nothing anywhere but what is vile, deceptive, and abominable, is thought to be the trade-mark of superfine godliness. It is the mark of a hypocrite to wear always a sad countenance: Job says of the hypocrite, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty?" and the answer that he expected was, "No, it is altogether impossible!" What! enjoy anything like mirth at any time! Awful! Now, I love Christian preciseness of action, but I abhor hypocritical decorum and formalistic exactness of worship. I would advocate holy cheerfulness,

a Christian freedom which lets the whole man show itself, a freedom of sorrowing when it is the time for sorrow, and a freedom of rejoicing when it is the time for rejoicing. The man whose heart is right with God does not stop always to be saying, "How will this look?" His heart tells him, as he reads the Word, that such a course is right, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he follows it.

5. Once more: the rush is well taken as an emblem of the mere professor from *its bearing no fruit*. Nobody would expect to find figs on a bulrush. So it is with the hypocrite: he brings forth no fruit. The hypocrite gets as far as this: "I do *not* drink, I do *not* swear, I do *not* cheat, I do *not* lie, I do *not* break the sabbath." His religion is all negative; but when it comes to anything positive he fails. What have you ever done for Christ? You may look at the whole of the hypocrite's life, and it yields nothing. Perhaps he has given a guinea or two to a charity. Yes: but did he give *it to God*? Throughout the whole life of the hypocrite there is nothing in which he really serves God. Though he has left off many wrong things, yet he has not advanced so far as to bring forth fruit meet for repentance; he has no faith, no joy, no hope, no conformity to the spirit of the Master.

II. Secondly, we have to consider WHAT IT IS THAT THE HYPOCRITE'S RELIGION LIVES ON. "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?"

Some people's religion cannot live without *excitement*: revival services, earnest preachers, and zealous prayer-meetings keep them green; but the earnest minister dies, or goes to another part of the country; the church is not quite so earnest as it was, and what then? Where are your converts? Oh, how many

there are who are hothouse plants! while the temperature is kept up to a certain point they flourish, and bring forth flowers, if not fruits; but take them out into the open air, give them one or two nights' frost of persecution, and where are they? My dear friends, beware of that godliness which depends upon excitement for its life. I do not speak against religious excitement: men get excited over politics, and science, and trade—why should they not be excited about the far weightier things of religion? But still, though you may indulge yourself with it sometimes, do not let it be your element. The grace which man gives, man can take away. Doubtless many are converted at revivals who run well and hold out, and then their conversion is the work of the Spirit of God; but there are as many, I fear, of another kind, who get delirious with excitement; who fancy that they have repented, dream that they have believed, and then imagine themselves to be the children of God, and go on in such a delusion perhaps year after year. Beware! beware!

Many mere professors live upon *encouragement*. You are the child of godly parents: those parents naturally look with great delight upon the first signs of grace in you, and they encourage and foster, as they should do, everything that is good. This is a very great privilege. But, dear friends, beware of the piety which depends upon encouragement. You will have to go, perhaps, where you will be frowned at and scowled at, where the head of the household, instead of encouraging prayer, will refuse you either the room or the time for engaging in it. You may meet with hard words, bitter sneers, and cruel mockings, because you profess to be a Christian. Oh, get grace which will stand that fiery trial!

Some, too, we know, whose religion

is sustained by *example*. Example is a good thing; one true sheep of Christ may lead the rest in the way of truth and obedience; but a religion which depends entirely on other people must obviously go to ruin when subjected to the temptation of an evil example. Young man, avoid this feeble sort of piety. Be a man who can be singular when to be singular is to be right. The dead fish floats down the stream, the live fish goes against it. Show your life by shunning unholy example.

Furthermore, a hypocrite's religion is often very much supported by the *profit* that he makes by it. He does not look upon the things of God as the main chance; they are means to an end—that is all. The rush will grow where there is plenty of mire, plenty of profit for religion; but dry up the gains, and where would some people's religion be?

III. WHAT BECOMES OF THE HYPOCRITE'S HOPE?

"While it is yet in its greenness and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." Long before the Lord comes to cut the hypocrite down, it often happens that *he dries up for want of the mire on which he lives*. The excitement, the encouragement, the example, the profit upon which he lived fail him, and he fails too. Alas, how dolefully is this the case in all Christian churches! "Oh," says one, "it cannot be me." Do not be too sure, friend, do not be too sure! I believe in the doctrine of the final persever-

ance of every true child of God; but there are, in all our churches, certain spurious pretenders who will not hold on their way, who will blaze and sparkle for a season, and then they will go out in darkness.

Yet again, where the rush still continues green because it has mire and water enough on which to feed, another result happens, namely, that *ere long the sickle is used to cut it down*. So must it be with thee, professor, if thou shalt keep up a green profession all thy days, yet if thou be heartless, yielding, unfruitful, like the rush, thou wilt be cut down. Oh, sad to be cut down at the last! "Am I, after all, mistaken? Have I played the hypocrite, and must I take the mask off now?" Oh, my dear friends, seek a genuine religion. Do not put off self-examination.

Ah, there are some of you who have no need to search! Without any trial you know yourselves to be on the wrong side; and there are others of you who, when you have searched, will be still afraid that you are wrong. Ah, well! whatsoever we are, or may have been, remember Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Believers, you have looked before; but if that be a matter of question, look *now*. Still

"There is life in a look at that crucified
One,
There is life at this moment for thee."

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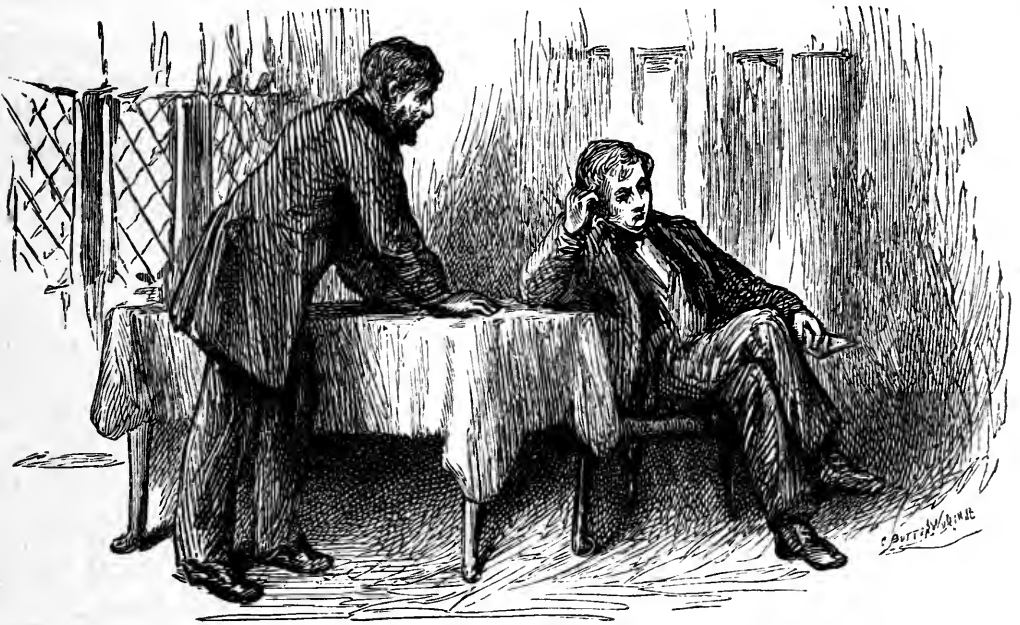
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“WHERE ART THOU?”



READER, the question before your eyes is the first which God asked of man after the fall. It is the question he put to Adam in the day that he ate the forbidden fruit, and became a sinner.

In vain did Adam and his wife hide themselves among the trees of the garden of Eden. In vain did they try to escape the eye of the all-

seeing God. They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day. “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” (Gen. iii. 9.) Think for a moment how awful those words must have sounded! Think what the feelings of Adam and Eve must have been!

Reader, 6,000 years have well nigh

passed away since this question was first asked. Millions of Adam's children have lived and died, and gone to their own place. Millions are yet upon earth, and every one of them has a soul to be lost or saved. But no question ever has been, or ever can be, asked more solemn than that which is before you,—Where art thou? *Where art thou in the sight of God?*

I. There are many people about whom the Bible shows me *I ought to be exceedingly afraid*. Reader, art thou one of them?

There are those who, if Bible words mean anything, have not yet been converted and born again. They are not justified. They are not sanctified. They have not the Spirit. They have no faith. They have no grace. Their sins are not forgiven. Their hearts are not changed. They are not ready to die. They are not meet for heaven. They are neither godly, nor righteous, nor saints. If they are, Bible words mean nothing at all.

Some of these persons, to all appearance, think no more about their souls, and of a life to come, than the horse and ox, which have no understanding. Their good things are plainly all on this side of the grave. Their attention is swallowed up by the perishable things of time. Meat, drink, and clothing,—money, houses, and land,—business, pleasure, or politics,—marrying, reading, or company;—these are the kind of things which fill their hearts. They live as if there were no such book as the Bible. They go on as if resurrection and eternal judgment were not true, but a lie. As to grace and conversion, and justification and holiness,—they are things which, like Gallio, they care not for;—they are words and names they are either ignorant of or despise. They are all going to die. They are

all going to be judged. And yet they seem to be even more hardened than the devil, for they appear neither to believe nor tremble. Alas! what a state this is for an immortal soul to be in! But oh, how common!

Some of the persons I speak of have got a form of religion, but after all it is nothing but a form. They profess and call themselves Christians. They go to a place of worship. But when you have said that, you have said all. Where is the religion of the New Testament to be seen in their lives? Nowhere at all! Sin is plainly not considered their worst enemy,—nor the Lord Jesus their best friend,—nor the will of God their rule of life,—nor salvation the great end of their existence. The spirit of slumber keeps possession of their hearts, and they are at ease, self-satisfied, and content.

God speaks to them continually, by mercies,—by afflictions,—by Sabbaths,—by sermons; but they will not hear. Jesus knocks at the door of their hearts, but they will not open. They are told of death and eternity, and remain unconcerned. They are warned against the love of the world, and plunge into it week after week without shame. They hear of Christ coming upon earth to die for sinners, and go away unmoved. There seems a place in their hearts for everything but God;—room for business,—room for pleasures,—room for trifling.—room for sin,—room for the devil,—room for the world; but, like the inn at Bethlehem, no room for Him who made them,—no admission for Jesus, the Spirit, and the word. Alas! what a condition of things is this! But alas! how common.

Reader, I put it solemnly to your conscience, as in the sight of God, are you one of those persons whom I have just described? If you are, I fear for you,—I am alarmed for you,—I am exceedingly afraid.

What is it that I fear for you? I fear everything. I fear lest you should persist in rejecting Christ till you have sinned away your own soul. I fear lest you come to such deadness and hardness of heart, that nothing but the voice of the archangel and the trump of God will break your sleep. I fear lest you cling to this vain world so closely, that nothing but death will part it and you. I fear lest you should live without Christ, die without pardon, rise again without hope, receive judgment without mercy, and sink into hell without remedy.

Reader, I must warn you, though I may seem, like Lot, as one that mocks. I do solemnly warn you to flee from the wrath to come. I entreat you to remember that the Bible is all true, and must be fulfilled,—that the end of your present ways is misery and sorrow,—that without holiness no man shall see the Lord,—that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God,—that God shall one day take account of all your doings, and that Christless sinners like yourself can never stand in his sight, for he is holy, and a consuming fire. Oh that you would consider these things!

I know well the excuses that you are going to make. You will tell me, "Religion is all very well, but a man must live." I answer, "It is quite true a man must *live*, but it is no less true that he must also *die*." You may tell me, "A man must mind his business first in this world." I answer, "Yes, and the first business a man should mind is his eternal business,—the business of his soul."

Reader, I beseech you in all affection to break off your sins,—to repent and be converted. I beseech you to change your course,—to alter your ways about religion,—to turn from your present carelessness about your soul, and become a new man.

I offer to you through Jesus Christ the forgiveness of all past sins,—free and complete forgiveness,—ready, present, everlasting forgiveness. I tell you, in my Master's name, that if you will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, this forgiveness shall at once be your own. Oh, do not refuse so gracious an invitation! Do not love this poor perishing world better than eternal life. Dare to be bold and decided. Resolve to come out from the broad way which leads to destruction. Arise and escape for your life, while it is called to-day. Repent, believe, pray, and be saved.

Reader, I fear for you in your present state. My heart's desire and prayer is that God may make you fear for yourself.

II. There are many people about whom the Bible shows me *I ought to stand in doubt*. Reader, art thou one of these?

There are many whom I must call almost Christians, for I know no other expression in the Bible which so exactly describes their state. They have many things about them which are right, and good, and praiseworthy in the sight of God. They are regular and moral in their lives. They are free from glaring outward sins. They keep up many decent and proper habits. They are usually diligent in their attendance on means of grace. They appear to love the preaching of the gospel. They are not offended at the truth as it is in Jesus, however plainly it may be spoken. They have no objection to religious company, religious books, and religious talk. They agree to all you say when you speak to them about their soul. And all this is well. But still there is no movement in the hearts of these people. There is always the same regularity about them,—the same constant attendance on means of grace,—the same wishing and hoping,—the same way

of talking about religion : but there is nothing more. There is no going forward in their Christianity. There is no life, and heat, and reality in it.

I cannot read the secrets of your hearts. Perhaps there is some pet bosom sin which you are holding fast and will not give up. Perhaps you are kept back by the fear of man : you are afraid of the blame or laughter of your fellow-creatures. Perhaps you are careless about private prayer and communion with God. This is one reason why multitudes are weak and sickly in spirit. But whatever your reason be, I warn you in all affection to take care what you are doing. Your state is neither satisfactory nor safe.

Reader, you must give up this halting between two opinions, if ever you mean to enjoy good evidences of your salvation. There must be an alteration in you. There must be a move. There is no real standing still in true Christianity. If God's work is not going forward in a man's heart, the devil's is ; and if a man is always at the same point in religion, the probability is that he has got no real religion at all.

III. There are some people about whom the Bible tells me *I ought to feel a good hope*. Reader, art thou one of these ?

The people I speak of have found out that they are guilty sinners, and have fled to Christ by faith for salvation. In themselves they see nothing but weakness and corruption, but in the Lord Jesus they see the very things their souls require,—pardon, peace, light, comfort, and strength.

Christ's blood, Christ's cross, Christ's righteousness, Christ's intercession,—these are the things on which their minds love to dwell. Their affections are now set on things above. They care for nothing so much as pleasing God. While they live, their chief desire is to live to the Lord. When they die, their only desire is to die in the Lord.

Reader, is this the state of your soul ? Do you find anything in your heart which answers to the account I have just given ? If you do, I thank God for it,—I congratulate you in your condition,—I feel a good hope about your soul.

And now, dear readers of every class to whom I have spoken, I heartily pray God to bless these pages to your souls. Oh that every reader would turn in upon himself and consider his own ways. Oh that each would ask himself the question, Where am I ? What am I ? Where am I going ? What will be the end of my present course ? *What is the hope of my soul ?*

Reader, once more I ask you not to despise my question. Think of it : consider it : pray over it. Oh that it may take firm hold of your heart, and never leave you ! Oh that it may be to your soul as life from the dead ! Time is fast ebbing away. Life is a vast uncertainty. Death is drawing nearer and nearer. Judgment is sure to come. Reader, WHERE ART THOU ? Where art thou in the sight of God ?

BISHOP RYLE.

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THE TWO CUPS.



(DANIEL V. 25.)

My thoughts one day had, somehow, been turned to the use of the word CUP in the Bible. I had marked the many passages in which the word occurs. I had noticed the many meanings connected with the word, some very blessed, some very awful. After doing this I mused or dreamed, half awake, half asleep, with the Bible still lying open before me at one of the most fearful passages in which that word occurs. Thus dreaming, or half dreaming, I thought I saw two cups standing on the open Bible. Both looked like gold; but I saw that the one was an imitation, the other real. Both were full. One was red and

sparkling, the other clear as crystal, and as motionless. Many came to drink the former; few, very few the latter. They who drank the former got violently excited and unnaturally mirthful for a while, but afterwards they looked pale and wretched, yet still returning and returning to drink. They who drank the latter seemed filled with a calmness and peace quite indescribable, but which shone out in all their features, as if every draught were pouring in health and heavenly gladness. I looked closely at the cups, and saw that they had inscriptions upon them. In large attractive letters the word "PLEASURE" was engraved on the former, as if to win every passer-by. But, looking more closely, I saw that some other hand had inscribed all round this red sparkling cup other words. They were the words which I had just been noting in the volume before me,—such as, "cup of trembling," (Isa. li. 17;) "the wine cup of his fury," (Jer. xxv. 15;) "the cup of devils," (1 Cor. x. 21;) "the cup of his indignation," (Rev. xiv. 10;) "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath," (Rev. xvi. 19.) On the other cup was engraved as legibly and brightly, that he who reads might run, "LIFE ETERNAL;" and all round, such words as, "the cup of salvation," (Psa. cxvi. 13;) "the cup of consolation," (Jer. xvi. 7;) "the cup of blessing," (1 Cor. x. 16;) "the cup of the Lord," (1 Cor. x. 21.) But the terrors of the former words round the cup of pleasure seemed to have no effect upon the multitudes. They drank and drank without fear or remorse. As little effect did the blessed words round the cup of life seem to have on these lovers of pleasure. They would not taste one drop of its pure and life-giving water.

Musing on the scene, I asked myself who are these that prefer the former and despise the latter? Alas! they are the millions of earth, for

"the whole world lieth in wickedness;" they are "mad upon their idols;" they "feed on ashes;" they "drink and are drunken, and fall and rise not again." I asked myself such questions as the following respecting one special sin, which in our day is ruining its millions.

Is the drunkard's cup really the cup of pleasure?—Is it not madness and sorrow? Do its contents ever impart aught but a moment's excitement, to be followed by a reaction of depression, and gloom, and ill temper: the man becoming dissatisfied with himself and with all around him, wishing in the bitterness of his spirit that he had never been born?

Is the drunkard's cup the cup of health?—Does it invigorate either soul or body, either intellect or heart? Does it brighten the eye? Does it steady the hand? Does it nerve the will for doing or for suffering? Does it soothe our pains or give us rest in weariness? Does it purify our blood or give the complexion of health to the countenance? Does it strengthen our limbs, or give tone to our system, or prolong life?

Is the drunkard's cup the cup of love?—Does love spring out of it? Does it not make man a demon? When filled with its contents, does he not rage, and war, and blaspheme?

Is the drunkard's cup the cup of manhood?—Is there aught of true manhood contained in it or produced by it? Does it not debase and brutify? Does it not unman, and unnerve, and stupefy? The wretched drinker may be a man before he tastes, but what is he when he has finished? Whatever may remain to him, *manhood* has gone out clean.

Is the drunkard's cup the cup of profit or usefulness?—What gains the poor victim of his lusts? Nothing either here or hereafter. He is a loser in every way,—in soul and body. It unfits him for service to his fellow-men. His is, to say the least of it, a

thoroughly *useless* life. And it is the cup of his lust, the god of his idolatry, that has made him the useless man he is.

Is the drunkard's cup the cup of life? —Is there *life* in that red sparkling cup? Does it quicken the soul? Is there not in it poison for soul and body? No life everlasting there. The sting of the adder is there; the deadly venom of the old serpent. Yes, it is the cup of sin, the cup of lust, the cup of Satan, the cup of death, the cup of woe.

Then I asked myself, But what of this other cup? Is it free to the thirsty? Yes, it is. May all without exception drink? Yes, all. May the poor drunkard drink,—may he leave his cup of evil, and press to his parched lips the cup of good? For it is truly a cup of good, unmingled good; and he who drinks receives its divine virtues into his soul. That cup has been filled by the Lord Jesus. He prepared its contents, he poured them in, he made the cup to overflow; he said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

I looked into this cup, and I saw that the love of God was there. Again I looked, and saw that salvation was there, eternal life was there, forgiveness was there, joy was there. It seemed just the cup for a needy soul.

I saw that every one who tasted it was filled with joy and peace, and that whoever tasted it went on to drink it without ceasing, always finding in it refreshment, health, and strength. Once he would not even look at it, now he cannot let it be away from his lips for a moment. It is to him the cup of salvation.

I saw, too, that it was always full. However many there might be who drank of it, (though they were not the many, but the few,) or however often and deeply they drank, it never failed, it never sank below the brim. It was like the sun, which never gets

the less bright for the light it gives away; it was always the same.

I observed, too, the well or source from which the waters which filled it were taken, and I read, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. 1.) Happy, thrice happy they who drink from such a cup, the water out of such a river. They are drinking heaven itself. God's own joy as well as God's own love is that which fills the cup. Have angels more than this? Have they so much? Oh, the brightness, the clearness, the freshness of that heavenly stream! What on earth can be compared to it? O cup of everlasting gladness, who would not drink of you?

I saw, moreover, what pains the Lord Jesus took to point out this cup, and to press it to the lips of the thirsty. He pities the thirst of earth. And because he truly pities its parched millions, he longs to see every one drinking of it. He is in earnest when he points to the cup and bids us drink. These words of his were true, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John iv. 10.)

I saw, too, how much men needed this cup. They went about saying, "Who will shew us any good?" They were not happy. They tried the other cup, but it would not do, it made them more miserable. Ah, they needed the water from the pure river of heaven; yes, needed it all the more because they despised it and drank elsewhere. Their need was great. At times they felt it, at other times not. But it was unspeakable. They were made to be happy, and they were not.

I saw, also, that in this refusal of theirs to drink there was SIN; not

sin once, but sin continually,—the sin of despising the God-provided cup and its divine waters. This was no common sin; it was, in God's sight, the sin of sins,—the sin of contemning the love of God, of rejecting God himself, of refusing his unspeakable gift. Oh, the unutterable *sin* involved in the sinner's refusal to be happy, his refusal to partake of the joy of God, his determination not to taste and see that the Lord is good.

I saw, too, that all this thirst, if not quenched now, would perpetuate itself for evermore. It would soon become eternal thirst,—thirst, when the water that would have quenched it had been removed for ever. The time would come when these thirsty ones would no more have access to that cup or to that living stream. And then what would the thirst become! If the thirst of earth were so desperate, what would be the thirst of hell? Would not that be as intolerable as it would be everlasting? Thirst, but no water. Weariness, but no rest. Emptiness, but no supply. Groans, but none to listen. Petitions, but none to answer. Longings for an end, but the end not approaching, nor to approach throughout all their eternal lifetime! Poor victims of thirst and woe! Children of unbelief, and self-will, and lust! Nothing for you hereafter but the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth. Oh, the eternal thirst of the lost soul!

As I saw all this, my spirit was stirred within me, and I went up to them to reason with them of their

madness. I spoke to them of their unrest and unrefreshment,—pointing to the cup of gladness that stood in view. I besought them in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech them by me, to drink. I told them how that cup could quench even *their* thirst; how much in earnest God was in providing that cup and presenting it to them. I reminded them of its contents, and told them that the love of God was there, that the joy of heaven was there, that health and immortality were there, that the cure of all evils was there, that the beginning and foretaste of heaven were there. I told them how *free* the blessings were, how ample and how suitable. What more could I do or say? I could not force them to drink, though I could weep over their thirst and woe. Some believed, and some believed not, saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter."

But to not a few there came no second hearing. The good news passed by and returned not. The sinner remained a sinner still. The thirsty remained thirsty still. The unsaved remained unsaved still. They would not drink. They would not come. They would not be saved. The Holy Spirit strove, but they would not be striven with. God spoke, but they would not hear. Their own inward wretchedness cried aloud, but they drowned its voice. They rushed madly on to the fearful goal, the divine voice all the while loudly and lovingly sounding in their ears, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

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EDMUND.



EDMUND was about the same age as myself, and, along with others, sat with me at the Bible class in our Sabbath school, on a good strong three-inch thick form, supported by six round legs. We had two teachers, attending each alternate Sunday. One of them was a tall, patient, red-cheeked man, with soft hands, kind words, and a loving heart. We called him Old James, and we all loved him. The other was a stern, bad-tempered man, with a stick, which he took care to make us all well acquainted with.

One Sunday morning Old James was talking to us about heaven. We had been reading the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, and the old man seemed almost in paradise

while he was reading and talking with us about it. Never before that day had I such a view of that happy place. Old James saw we were all affected, and he laid his soft hands on our heads, one by one, and besought us to be good lads, and keep holy the Sabbath day, and then we should go to that glorious place of which we had been reading.

Most of us had taken our dinners to the school, for nearly all in that class resided two or three miles from the place. At noon we gathered round the large, warm stove, in the bottom of the chapel, and began to untie our small linen handkerchiefs, to see what we had brought for dinner.

As we sat round the stove, we began to talk about heaven, our morning lesson. Edmund said to me,—

“Johnny, does thou think thou will ever get to heaven?”

“I hope I shall, Edmund,” I replied.

“And where will thou sit in heaven,—with Old James, or with him with the stick?” Edmund asked.

“With Old James, to be sure,” was my answer.

“So will I, and so will I,” said the other lads, all round.

That day we were all very good, and made a bargain that we would always go to the school, and keep the Sabbath day holy, as Old James had requested us.

Spring came, and with the spring came a great misfortune to Edmund: he got a new swallow-tailed coat, or, as we called it, a jacket with laps. So long as he had only a round jacket, like the rest of us, he seemed all right, but the laps made him quite a somebody. He thought and said he was too big now to go to the Sunday school; so he left us and went away.

It was many months before I met with Edmund again; but one Sun-

day evening, on returning from the school, I saw him in company with several others, whom twelve months before he would not have been seen with. He stood on the top of a hedge, a short distance from the highway, and, the moment he saw me, he put his hands to his mouth and shouted,—

“Amen! amen! let us pray;” and then, with his companions, burst out laughing.

I stood still, and, looking at Edmund, said, speaking loud so that he could hear,—

“Edmund, is this keeping the Sabbath day holy, as you promised you would?”

But this only brought a fresh peal of laughter, with another “Amen! amen!”

Edmund had now become the companion of fools, and could mock at the Sabbath. It was easy to predict what would follow, for the way in which a person regards the Lord's day is always a test of character. It is God's day,—the Sabbath of the Lord. It was mercifully given to man—to all men—at creation; confirmed when the law was given on Sinai; and the commandment then written by the hand of God himself imperatively demanded it should be kept holy.

Edmund's subsequent life will show what misery a disregard of the Lord's day often entails.

A rough, drunken character that sometimes attended the Chapel for the Destitute, came to request I would go to see a young man who was very ill in one of our lodging-houses. He said, “I guess he is somebody's child, and should not be left to die like a dog. He says he knows you; come, go wi' me and pray wi' him, if he wants it; that will do no harm, at any rate.”

I at once went with the rough messenger, and found a young man doubled up with pain, in a miserable bed. He groaned, and entreated

some one to put something warm to his feet. I immediately got the oven plate, wrapped in an old rag, and pressed it to his cold feet. This soon brought relief. I had not seen his face, for he covered his head with the bed-clothes the moment I went into the room, and seemed determined I should not know him. But the rough man said to him,—

“Hold up thy face, Ned, and let Mr. Ashworth see who thee art. What art te feared on?”

The dirty sheet was pulled off Ned's face, and I found that Ned was my old Sunday schoolfellow, Edmund. He had been drinking for several days, fell ill, and crept into a common lodging-house, as he thought to die; but care and nursing brought him round. He began work again, thankful for the kindness shown him. He told me, during his sickness, that he never had attended a place of worship for years, but that he never saw people going to the chapel or church without envying them; that he was most miserable on the Sunday, and thousands of times had wished that he had followed the advice of Old James, and kept the Sabbath day holy.

The next time I saw Edmund was under still more painful circumstances. I had been several days serving on the jury, at the Manchester Quarter Sessions, and, perhaps in consequence of my name beginning with A, was appointed foreman. There were many persons to be tried for stealing, and amongst the number I was sorry to find the name of my old Bible class mate. The charge against him was that, along with three others, he had stolen a sack of malt. Edmund was the least guilty; he had nothing to do with the stealing, but part of the malt was found in a bag under his bed. The trial did not last long, for there was no doubt of their

guilt. Being the foreman, it was my duty to pronounce the finding of the jury, and when the court crier, with a loud voice, called out, “Gentlemen of the jury, do you find Edmund — guilty or not guilty?” with a heavy heart I looked at Edmund. Our eyes met, and in his eyes I could read the workings of his soul; they plainly said, “Have pity on me!” A choking sensation rose to my throat, and I was very near breaking down before I could pronounce the word — Guilty!

After Edmund came out of prison, he was comparatively steady for many years. He kept away from thieves, but still most of his Sundays were spent in the public-house. I had often invited him to attend some place of worship, and never again to touch one drop of drink. Again and again he promised to turn over a new leaf, but he did not. An old proverb says that “the way to hell is paved with good intentions.” Good resolutions, made in our own strength, are as weak as a straw.

Another message came,—this time brought by an old woman. She informed me that she had a man staying at her house, dying of consumption,—that he kept calling out, “Will some one go and fetch John Ashworth? I am sure he will come if you tell him how ill I am. Do go and fetch him!”

I entered the sick-room of Edmund, for he it was that the old woman had fetched me to see. I was glad this time to find him in a clean, decent place.

“I am fain you are come, John, but you have only come to see a wreck, — a poor skeleton,” were Edmund's first words.

“But why are you glad to see me? I fear I can do but little for you now, Edmund.”

“But surely I must not die as I

am—unprepared, unprepared! surely not, surely not!”

“But I cannot save you, Edmund, nor all the men in the world; no, nor all the saints and angels in heaven.”

“But surely I must be saved, John! What must I do? do tell me!”

“Do you believe you are a sinner, Edmund?”

“Yes, I do,” was his reply.

“Do you believe that Christ died for you, and that he can save you?”

“Yes, I believe he could; but I don’t believe he ever will.”

“Then there is no hope for you. If you don’t believe he *will* save you, how can you be saved?”

“Well, then, I can never be saved; for I have been so wicked and sinned so long, and done it with my eyes wide open, for I knew better. Sabbath-breaking has brought me to this; that was my first wrong step. O that I could but undo what I have done; but this can never be! What must be done?”

“Believe that Christ will save you, Edmund,” I answered.

“But how can I?—how can I?”

“Because he says he will, and you ought to believe him, for if you don’t you grieve him.”

“Where does Christ say that? Do tell me, John.”

“You read many times in the Bible class, at school, these words: ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,—he came to seek and to save that which was lost;’ and to those that are burdened with sin, he

says, ‘Come to me, and I will give you rest.’”

I then paused, to let the merciful words of a merciful Saviour have their full weight. For a long time we were both silent; I feared to disturb his thoughts, for he was evidently surprised at what had been said. I took out my handkerchief to wipe the tears that were running down each side of his face, but still I spoke not. Heaving a deep sigh, he quietly turned his head, and, looking me in the face, slowly said,—

“Is it so?—is there mercy for me?”

Seeing he was exhausted, I took my pocket Testament, read some portions suitable for his condition, and then knelt down to plead for poor Edmund. Oh, how precious to me was the sinner’s Friend at that moment!

During that night Edmund was taken with a fit of coughing, and burst a blood-vessel; and when I called the following morning, I saw a worn-out body covered with a white sheet. Edmund was dead.

Do I think he was saved? It is for no one to answer such a question. The Judge of all the earth will do right; but if the Sabbath-breaker and impenitent take warning, my object will be answered in writing this narrative of my old schoolfellow, EDMUND.

—JOHN ASHWORTH. *Reprinted by permission, abridged.*

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GOD JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—ROMANS iv. 5.



I CALL your attention to those words, "*Him that justifieth the ungodly.*" They seem to me to be very wonderful words.

Are you not surprised that there should be such an expression as that in the Bible, "That justifieth the

ungodly"? I have heard men that hate the doctrines of the cross bring it as a charge against God, that he saves wicked men and receives to himself the vilest of the vile. See how this scripture accepts the charge, and plainly states it! By

the mouth of his servant Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he takes to himself the title of "Him that justifieth the ungodly." He makes those just who are unjust, forgives those who deserve to be punished, and favours those who deserve no favour. You thought, did you not, that salvation was for the good? that God's grace was for the pure and holy, who are free from sin? It has fallen into your mind that, if you were excellent, then God would reward you; and you have thought that, because you are not worthy, therefore there could be no way of your enjoying his favour. It does sound surprising, then, does it not, that it should be possible for a holy God to justify an unholy man? He says that "there is none righteous, no, not one." He knows that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" and, therefore, the Lord Jesus did not come into the world to look after goodness and righteousness among men, but to bring goodness and righteousness with him, and to bestow them upon persons who have none of them. He comes, not because we *are* just, but to make us so: he justifieth the ungodly.

It should be the barrister's object to justify the innocent person, and he should not attempt to screen the guilty party. It lies not in man's right nor in man's power truly to justify the guilty. This is a miracle reserved for the Lord alone. God has devised ways and means of making the ungodly man to stand justly accepted before him.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners*. It is a very surprising thing—a thing to be marvelled at most of all by those who enjoy it. I know that it is to me even to this day the greatest wonder that I ever heard of, that God should ever justify *me*. I know by a full assurance, that I am justified by

faith which is in Christ Jesus, and treated as if I had been perfectly just, and made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ; and yet by nature I must take my place among the most sinful. I am loved with as much love as if I had always been godly, whereas aforetime I was ungodly. Who can help being astonished at this? Gratitude for such favour stands dressed in the robes of wonder.

Now, while this is very surprising, I want you to notice how available it makes the gospel to you and to me. If God justifieth the *ungodly*, then, dear friend, he can justify *you*. Is not that the very kind of person that you are? If you are unconverted at this moment, it is a very proper description of you: you have lived without God, you have been the reverse of godly; in one word, you have been and are *ungodly*. Perhaps you have not even attended a place of worship on the Sabbath, but have lived in disregard of God's day, and house, and word—this proves you to have been ungodly. Sadder still, it may be you have even tried to doubt God's existence, and have gone the length of saying that you did so. You have lived on this fair earth, which is full of the tokens of God's presence, and all the while you have shut your eyes to the clear evidences of his power and Godhead. You have lived as if there were no God. If you were labelled **UNGODLY** it would as well describe you as if the sea were to be labelled *salt water*. Would it not?

Possibly you are a person of another sort; you have regularly attended to all the outward forms of religion, and yet you have had no heart in them at all, but have been really ungodly. Though meeting with the people of God, you have never met with God for yourself. You have lived without any love to God in your heart, or regard to

his commands in your life. Well, you are just the kind of man to whom this gospel is sent—this gospel which says that God justifieth *the ungodly*. It is very wonderful, but it is happily available for you. It just suits you. Does it not? How I wish that you would accept it!

Now, observe further, that *it must be so*—that the salvation of God is for those who do not deserve it, and have no preparation for it. It is reasonable that the statement should be put in the Bible; for, dear friend, no others need justifying but those who have no justification of their own. If any of my readers are perfectly righteous, they want no justifying. You feel that you are doing your duty well, and almost putting heaven under an obligation to you. What do you want with a Saviour, or with mercy? What do you want with justification?

If any of you are giving yourselves such proud airs, listen to me for a little while. You will be lost, as sure as you are alive. You righteous men, whose righteousness is all of your own working, are either deceivers or deceived; for the scripture cannot lie, and it saith plainly, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In any case, I have no gospel to preach to the self-righteous,—no, not a word of it. Jesus Christ himself came not to call the righteous, and I am not going to do what he did not do. No, I bid you rather look at that righteousness of yours till you see what a delusion it is. It is not half so substantial as a cobweb. Have done with it! Flee away from it!

Now, look. If there be anywhere in the world a physician who has discovered sure and precious remedies, to whom is that physician sent? To those who are perfectly healthy? I trow not. Put him down in a district where there are no sick persons, and he feels that he is not in his place. "The whole have no

need of a physician, but they that are sick." Is it not equally clear that the great remedies of grace and redemption are for the sick in soul? They cannot be for the whole, for they cannot be of use to such. If you, dear friend, feel that you are spiritually sick, the Physician has come into the world for you. If you are altogether undone by reason of your sin, you are the very person aimed at in the plan of salvation. Pardon must be for the guilty. Forgiveness must be for the sinful. It were absurd to talk of forgiving those who do not need forgiveness—pardoning those who have never offended.

Do you think that you must be lost because you are a sinner? This is the reason why you can be saved. Because you own yourself to be a sinner, I would encourage you to believe that grace is ordained for such as you are. It is truly so, that Jesus seeks and saves that which is lost. He died and made a real atonement for real sinners. He did not die for imaginary sins, but his heart's blood was spilt to wash out deep crimson stains which nothing else can remove.

If you are not lost, what do you want with a Saviour? Should the shepherd go after those who never went astray? Why should the woman sweep her house for the bits of money that were never out of her purse? No, the medicine is for the diseased; the quickening is for the dead; the pardon is for the guilty; liberation is for those who are bound; the opening of eyes is for those who are blind. How can the Saviour, and his death upon the cross, and the gospel of pardon, be accounted for, unless it be upon the supposition that men are guilty and worthy of condemnation? The sinner is the gospel's reason for existence. You, my friend, to whom this word now comes, if you are undeserving, ill-

deserving, hell-deserving, you are the sort of man for whom the gospel is ordained, and arranged, and proclaimed. God justifieth the ungodly.

It does at first seem most amazing to an awakened man, that salvation should really be for him as a lost and guilty one. He thinks that it must be for him as a penitent man, forgetting that his penitence is a part of his salvation. "Oh," says he, "but I must be this and that"—all which is true, for he shall be this and that as the result of salvation; but salvation comes to him before he has any of the results of salvation. It comes to him, in fact, while he deserves only this bare, beggarly, base, abominable description, "*ungodly*." That is all he is when God's gospel comes to justify him.

May I, therefore, urge upon any who have no good thing about them—who fear that they have not even a good feeling, or anything whatever that can recommend them to God—that they will firmly believe that our gracious God is able and willing to take them without anything to recommend them, and to forgive them spontaneously, not because *they* are good, but because *he* is good. O friend, the great grace of God surpasses my conception and your conception, and I would have you think worthily of it. He can abundantly pardon. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: forgiveness is for the guilty.

Do not attempt to touch yourself up and make yourself something other than you really are; but come

as you are to Him who justifies the ungodly. A great artist some short time ago had painted a part of the corporation of the city in which he lived, and he wanted, for historic purposes, to include in his picture certain characters well known in the town. A crossing-sweeper, unkempt, ragged, filthy, was known to everybody, and there was a suitable place for him in the picture. The artist said to this ragged and rugged individual, "I will pay you well if you will come down to my studio and let me take your likeness." He came round in the morning, but he was soon sent about his business; for he had washed his face, and combed his hair, and donned a respectable suit of clothes. He was needed as a beggar, and was not invited in any other capacity. Even so, the gospel will receive you into its halls if you come as a sinner, but not else. Wait not for reformation, but come at once for salvation. God justifieth *the ungodly*, and that takes you up where you now are: it meets you in your worst estate.

Come and ask the Lord to justify another ungodly one. Why should he not? Come along with you; for this great mercy of God is meant for such as you are. I put it in the language of the text, and I cannot put it more strongly: the Lord God himself takes to himself this gracious title, "*Him that justifieth the ungodly*." He makes just, and causes to be treated as just, those who by nature are ungodly. Is not that a wonderful word for you?

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WHAT IF IT BE ALL TRUE?



JOHN NEWTON had a pious mother, who was taken from him when he was only seven years old. She taught him, when but an infant, to pray, and sowed in his young heart the seeds of his future spiritual life.

When a boy, he was led to think much of God and of eternal things; but his impressions wore off, and he entered on a course of sin. It seemed

as if he had broken loose from all bonds, and delighted only in what was evil.

He was thrown from a horse, and was in great danger of his life, but was preserved. Then his conscience awoke once more, and he trembled at the thought of appearing before God, sinful and unready. Under this dread he forsook his sins for a

while, and gave up his profane living and speaking; but the reformation was only outward, and did not last long.

At another time, dread of God's wrath overtook him, and he began to live, as he thought, a very religious life. He thought to make himself righteous, and so to win God's favour. He spent much time in reading the Scriptures; he prayed; he fasted; he would hardly trust himself to speak, lest he should utter a vain or sinful word. Ignorant of God's righteousness, he was bent on having one of his own, by having which he hoped to pacify his conscience, and get quit of his fear of coming wrath.

This did not last long. He gave up religion altogether, and became an infidel. He now rushed into wickedness of every kind, and yet he only became more wretched. He went to sea on board a slave ship, and took part in that horrid trade. He was reduced to utter poverty,—starving, and sinning, and blaspheming,—his heart hard and his conscience seared. He was in very deed the prodigal son, wasting his substance with riotous living, yet not "coming to himself," nor saying, "I will arise, and go to my father." Once and again he was in peril of his life by sea and land. Half intoxicated, and dancing on deck one midnight, his hat went overboard, and he was throwing himself after it when laid hold of and dragged back by his comrades. Thus he hurried on in sin, as he himself in one of his hymns describes it:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear."

Finding one day a religious book on board the vessel, he took it up, and, looking into it, was led to ask the question, "WHAT IF ALL THIS BE TRUE?" The thought terrified him, and he closed the book. He went to bed that night as

usual, having contrived to put this solemn question out of his mind. In the dark night he was awakened by the dash of waves. A storm had risen, a terrible sea had swept over the vessel, and the cabin where he lay was fast filling. The cry rose, "The ship is sinking!" All was confusion and terror. He twice made for the deck, but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who bade him bring a knife. As he was returning for the knife, another man went up in his place, and was washed away, God thus reminding the spared one of his doom, and of the wonderful escape he had made.

Thoughts of other days began to come back upon him; the remembrance of those whom he loved affected him, and his heart seemed softening. For four weeks the vessel was tossed to and fro, he sometimes at the helm, and sometimes at the pumps, wave upon wave breaking over him. Then, in the midst of danger, day and night his cry went up, "O God, save me, or I perish;" and, "The God of the Bible forgive me for his Son's sake;" and, "My mother's God, the God of mercy, have mercy upon me."

That storm was to John Newton what the earthquake was to the jailor at Philippi: it brought him to his knees. It brought his sins before him. It brought before him his eternal ruin. It brought him to the cross and blood of Christ. The hymn of which we have already quoted the first two lines, goes on to tell his experience:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till A NEW OBJECT struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career."

The "new object" which met his eye as he stood at the helm or walked the deck, with the waves dashing over him, was the crucified Christ. The cross, and the Son of God there bearing our sins, stood out before

him in the brightness of divine love. For thus he sings :

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood."

As it was with Simon Peter when the Lord turned and looked upon him, so was it with John Newton. In both cases the look of love melted the sinner down :

"Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look ;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke."

That look of love, holy love, went through and through his conscience, making him feel his sin in all its vileness. *Sin*, which had hitherto been treated by him as a mere trifle, or been altogether overlooked, now presented itself in all its terrors. He was doomed ; he was lost : what shall he do ?

"My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair ;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there."

He is overwhelmed ; he is in despair. That look of holy love has smitten him through and through. It says to him : "Thou art the man ; thou didst it all ; thou hast nailed me to the tree ; had it not been for thy sins, I had not been here." But as he looks, he sees something more in that look, and hears the voice of pardon coming from the cross :

"A second look he gave, which said,
I freely all forgive :
This blood is for thy ransom paid ;
I die that thou may'st live."

This second look speaks of peace. He reads forgiveness in it—free forgiveness to the chief of sinners—forgiveness to "the old African blasphemer," and his troubled conscience is pacified. "I have found a ransom," is the message which removes his terror ; and this ransom is by the blood and death of the Son of God. That ransom suffices.

God looks at it and is satisfied ; he says it is enough. The sinner looks at it and is satisfied ; he says it is enough. The burden of guilt is unloosed, and falls from his shoulders. He is set free from guilt, from terror, from bondage. He knows the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. He has believed, and he is saved ; nay, and he knows that he is saved, for he credits the heavenly record concerning Him to whom he is looking :

"Thus, while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too."

Forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb,—forgiveness through the belief of the Holy Spirit's testimony to the finished work of Immanuel,—this is now his resting-place ; and his whole life is changed. That holy pardon has made him a holy man.

And now let us come back to the first thought that struck him,—

"WHAT IF ALL THIS BE TRUE ?"

Here is a question for us, no less than for him.

If eternity be true, then it becomes me to prepare for it, for endless terror or endless joy can be no trifles. If I must live for ever, then I must seek so to live here as to make that everlasting living a happy one. Otherwise it had been good for me that I had never been born.

If sin be true, then I must not trifle with it ; and if God hates it utterly, then I must hate it too, and I must get quit of it. And I must get quit of it in God's way, for no other way of deliverance will avail. That which is so awfully real and powerful as sin is, can only be taken away by something as real and as powerful as itself.

If the cross of Christ be true, then I must deal with it accordingly. It is meant to be the death of sin and

the life of righteousness. It is meant to be the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. It is meant to be the place where all sin is borne by another for us, so that we live by the death of another, and are pardoned by the condemnation of another. My acceptance of the great work done there is my deliverance from wrath, and sin, and death. I am not bidden *work* for pardon: I get it freely, and without desert. I am not bidden *wait* for pardon: I get it at once as a finished and provided gift, bestowed upon every one who will go to God for it, and take it in his appointed way.

If all these things be true, then I must be *in earnest*. Everything connected with God and Christ, with sin and pardon, with life and death, with wrath and favour, with time and eternity, is so unspeakably momentous, that I must be up and minding these things without delay. If I am not in earnest, I am a fool; for what shall it profit me to gain the whole world and to lose my soul? I must seek the right thing. I must seek it at the right time. I must seek it in the right way. I must go straight to God for all I want; and I must meet him at the cross.

My friend, would you be *happy*? You must go to God for his love and joy. This world, with riches and pleasures to the full, will do nothing for you. It cannot fill you. It cannot give you peace. But the God who made you can fill you and give you peace—his own satisfying peace. Go *immediately*, and get it

from him. He giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.

My friend, would you be *safe*? You must seek your safety in the Son of God, and beneath the protection of his cross. In him only you are safe. His cross is a shield and hiding-place for time and eternity. Time will soon be done: the last trumpet may soon sound, and you must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give account of the deeds done in the body. Seek *immediate safety* in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. He waits to welcome the guilty. He loves to bless the sinner. Go to him now, and deal with him fully, and fervently, and honestly, about that soul of yours. He will not send you empty away.

My friend, is it your desire to be delivered from sin? Then look to Him on whom alone there is deliverance. He saves from sin. He wishes you to be holy. He will make you fruitful in every good word and work. And remember the solemn words which so many overlook: "Follow *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord;" and remember again the end for which God saves us, "that we might be partakers of his *holiness*." Turn away from all evil. Be not conformed to this world. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

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JULY 1890.

DO YOU LOVE CHRIST?

"LOVEST THOU ME?"—JOHN XXI. 16.



READER, this subject deserves the consideration of every reasonable man who believes the Bible. Life or death, heaven or hell, depend on our ability to answer the simple question, "Do you love Christ?"

I. In the first place, let me show you *the peculiar feeling of a true Christian towards Christ*,—he loves him.

A true Christian is not a mere baptized man or woman. He is not a person who only goes as a matter of form to a church or chapel on Sundays, and lives all the rest of the week as if there was no God. All are not true Christians who are members of the visible church of Christ.

The true Christian is one whose

religion is in his heart and life. It is felt by himself in his heart. It is seen by others in his conduct and life. He feels his sinfulness, guilt, and badness, and repents. He sees Jesus Christ to be that divine Saviour whom his soul needs, and commits himself to him.

But, reader, besides all this, there is one thing in a true Christian which is eminently peculiar to him. That thing is love to Christ.

Hear what St. Paul says to the Corinthians: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) St. Paul allows no way of escape to the man who does not love Christ. The curse is yet upon him. He is on the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

Hear what St Paul says to the Ephesians: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." (Eph. vi. 24.) The apostle is here sending his good wishes, and declaring his good will to all true Christians. All had not attained to the same degree, whether in doctrine or practice. But all loved Christ in sincerity.

Hear once more what our Lord Jesus Christ said to the Apostle Peter after he rose from the dead. Three times he asked him the question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" (John xxi. 15-17.) He might have said: "Believest thou? Art thou converted? Art thou ready to confess me? Wilt thou obey me?" He uses none of these expressions. He simply says: "Lovest thou me?" This is the point, he would have us know, on which a man's Christianity hinges.

Reader, would you know the secret of this peculiar feeling towards Christ which distinguishes the true Christian? You have it in the words of St. John: "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 19.) That text no doubt applies

specially to God the Father. But it is no less true of God the Son.

A true Christian loves Christ for all he *has done* for him. He has suffered in his stead, and died for him on the cross. He has called him by his Spirit to self-knowledge, repentance, faith, hope, and holiness. He has forgiven all his many sins, and blotted them out. He has given him light instead of darkness, peace of conscience instead of uneasiness, hope instead of uncertainty, life instead of death. Can you wonder that the true Christian loves Christ?

And he loves him, besides, for all that he *is still doing*. He feels that he is daily washing away his many shortcomings and infirmities, and pleading his soul's cause before God.

Reader, this love to Christ is the inseparable companion of saving faith. A faith of devils, a mere intellectual faith, a man may have without love, but not that faith which saves.

Love to Christ is the mainspring of work for Christ. There is little done for his cause on earth from sense of duty, or from knowledge of what is right and proper. The *heart* must be interested before the hands will move and continue moving.

Examine the characters of Owen and Baxter, of Rutherford, of Whitfield and Wesley, of Hewitson and M'Cheyne. These men have left a mark on the world. And what was the common feature of their characters? They all loved Christ. They not only held a creed. They loved a Person, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love to Christ is the common meeting-point of believers of every branch of Christ's church on earth. They all "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Many of them, perhaps, are ignorant of systematic divinity, and could argue but feebly in defence of their creed. But they all know what they feel toward Him.

who died for their sins.—“I cannot speak much for Christ, sir,” said an old uneducated Christian woman to Dr. Chalmers; “but if I cannot speak for him, I could die for him!”

Reader, DO YOU LOVE CHRIST?

II. *The peculiar marks by which love to Christ makes itself known.*

If we love a person, *we like to think about him.* We do not forget his name, or his appearance, or his character, or his opinions, or his tastes, or his position, or his occupation. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. Christ dwells in his heart, and is thought of more or less every day.

If we love a person, *we like to hear about him.* We find a pleasure in listening to those who speak of him. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. He likes those sermons best which are full of Christ. He enjoys that society most in which people talk of the things which are Christ's.

If we love a person, *we like to read about him.* What intense pleasure a letter from an absent husband gives to a wife, or a letter from an absent son to his mother! Others may see little worth notice in the letter. But those who love the writer see something in the letter which no one else can. They carry it about with them as a treasure. They read it over and over again. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. The true Christian delights to read the Scriptures, because they tell him about his beloved Saviour.

If we love a person, *we like to please him.* We are glad to consult his tastes and opinions, to act upon his advice, and do the things which he approves. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. To him Christ's commandments are not grievous, and Christ's

burden is light. And why is all this? Simply because he loves him.

If we love a person, *we like his friends.* Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. The true Christian regards all Christ's friends as his friends. He is more at home with them in a few minutes than he is with many worldly people after an acquaintance of several years. And what is the secret of all this? It is simply affection to the same Saviour, and love to the same Lord.

If we love a person, *we like to talk to him.* We tell him all our thoughts, and pour out all our heart to him. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. He tells him his wants and fears. He asks comfort of him in trouble. He cannot help it. Why is this? Simply because he loves him.

Finally, if we love a person, *we like to be always with him.* We long to be always in his company. Well, reader, it is just so between the true Christian and Christ. The heart of a true Christian longs for that blessed day when he will see his Master face to face, and go out no more.

Reader, I speak of things that are familiar to every one. Love to the Lord Jesus Christ is no hidden, secret, impalpable thing. It is like light,—it will be seen. It is like sound,—it will be heard. It is like heat,—it will be felt. Where it exists, it cannot be hid. Where it cannot be seen, you may be sure there is none.

1. Let me ask you, for one thing, to look my question fairly in the face, and *try to answer it.* After reading all that I have said about it, can you honestly say that you love Christ?

It is no answer to tell me that you believe the truth of Christianity. True saving Christianity is not the mere believing a certain set of opinions. Its essence is knowing,

trusting, and loving a certain living Person who died for us,—even Christ the Lord.

Reader, it is vain to conceal that if you do not love Christ, your soul is in great danger. Open your eyes. Consider your ways, and be wise.

2. In the next place, if you do not love Christ, let me tell you plainly what is the reason,—*you have no feeling of obligation to him.* You have no abiding recollection of having got anything from him. This being the case, it is not likely, it is not probable, it is not reasonable, that you should love him.

To see your need of Christ and your amazing debt to Christ, is the first step towards loving him. To search God's book, and ask God for light in prayer, is the right course by which to attain saving knowledge. Reader, do not be above taking the advice I offer. Take it and be saved.

3. If you really know anything of love towards Christ, rejoice in the thought that you have good evidence about the state of your soul. Love, I tell you this day,—love is an evidence of grace.

For another thing, if you love Christ, never be ashamed to let others see it and know it. Speak for him. Witness for him. Live for him. Work for him.

“Man,” said a thoughtless, ungodly English traveller to a North American Indian convert,—“man, what is the reason that you make so much of Christ and talk so much about him? What has this Christ done for you, that you should make so much ado about him?”

The converted Indian did not answer him in words. He gathered together some dry leaves and moss, and made a ring with them on the ground. He picked up a live worm, and put it in the middle of the ring. He struck a light, and set the moss and leaves on fire. The flame soon rose, and the heat scorched the worm. It writhed in agony, and, after trying in vain to escape on every side, curled itself up in the middle, as if about to die in despair. At that moment the Indian reached forth his hand, took up the worm gently and placed it on his bosom. “Stranger,” he said to the Englishman, “do you see that worm? I was that perishing creature. I was dying in my sins, hopeless, helpless, and on the brink of eternal fire. It was Jesus Christ who put forth the arm of his power. It was Jesus Christ who delivered me with the hand of his grace, and plucked me from everlasting burnings. It was Jesus Christ who placed me, a poor sinful worm, near the heart of his love. Stranger, that is the reason why I talk of Jesus Christ, and make much of him. I am not ashamed of it, because I love him.”

Reader, if we know anything of love to Christ, may we have the mind of the North American Indian! May we never think that we can love Christ too well, live to him too thoroughly, confess him too boldly, lay ourselves out for him too heartily!

BISHOP RYLE.

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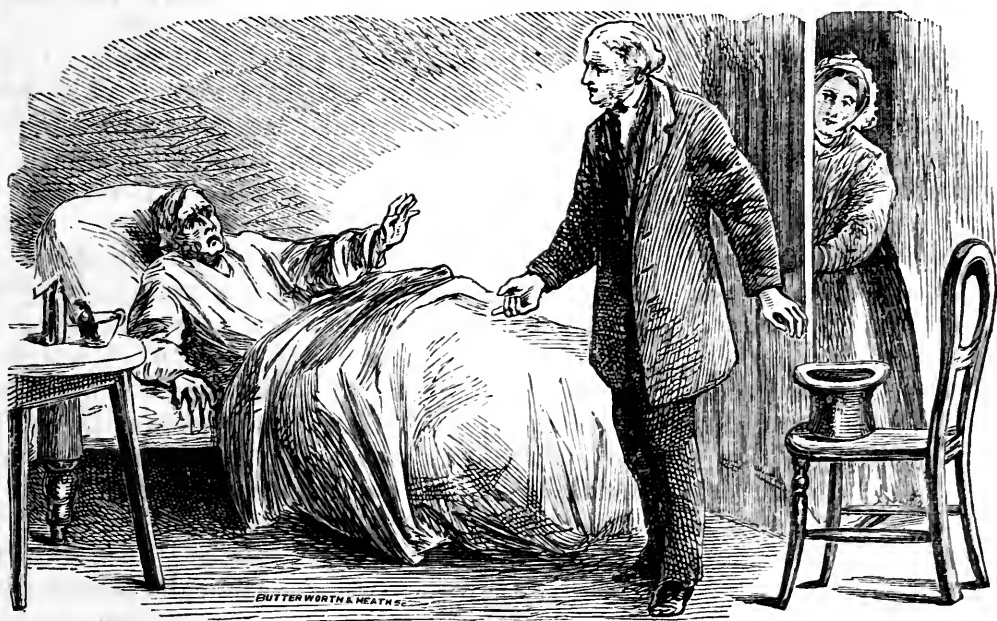
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“WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?”



JUST before the commencement of the service in my church, a note was placed in my hands, requesting the prayers of the congregation on behalf of William I——, of Duke Street, and asking me to visit him.

Being more than fully occupied all the Sabbath, I called at the man's house early on Monday. I at once observed, by his wife's

manner, that my visit was unlooked for. On my asking, however, to see her husband, she said, "He is in bed in the back parlour; but, sir," she added, "I would not advise your going to him. He does not like parsons, and will be sure to insult you."

"Never mind," I said. "Just tell your husband I wish to see him."

"Oh, sir, I dare not," was her reply. "If you like you can go to the room yourself, but I recommend your not doing so."

I confess the woman's mysterious manner excited my curiosity, as well as my determination to fulfil the duty before me, come what would. Accordingly I knocked at the chamber door. A deep, hollow voice said, "Come in," muttering at the same time a curse at the disturbance. I opened the door; and there lay before me, on a sort of a sofa-bed, a man of about fifty years of age. A look of intense suffering was stamped upon his strongly-marked features, but on his seeing me this was rapidly succeeded by one of defiance and rage. His salutation was, "What brings *you* here?"

"I come as the minister of God, for good to your soul," was my reply.

"Then the sooner you go away, the better. Nobody wants you here."

I said, "I have not come of my own accord. I have had this note," unfolding the paper I had received the previous day, "requesting me to visit you, and desiring the prayers of the congregation in your behalf in church yesterday. The last request has been complied with. I have now come to see you, as desired."

"Then if you don't go at once, you'll repent it."

"I dare not go now," I said. "I have not come here, as I have told you, of my own accord; but, being here, I must do the work my Master in heaven has sent me for. And I must answer to my God for the use I make of this visit."

An expression of contempt, mingled with diabolical hatred, now marked his features, as he replied, "Who is God? Where is heaven? There is neither one nor the other."

"Yes," I said, "there *is* a God, and you know it as well as I do. And there is a heaven, a bright, blessed, glorious heaven; and there

is a hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And there is a Saviour, who left that glorious heaven, and took upon him our nature, and lived a life of holy obedience, to satisfy and fulfil the requirements of God's law on our behalf, and to die the accursed death upon the cross, to save you and me from perishing for ever. Now that Saviour has sent me to tell you of his love—to tell you of his power—to tell you that, though you have brought yourself to the very verge of hell, yet, if now you feel your lost and perishing condition, and will look unto him, as the dying Israelites did to the brazen serpent, believing with all your heart, he will save even such a sinner as you—even *you*; for he came to seek and to save that which was lost."

I watched the changes of his countenance as I spoke. The look of scornful hate gave way to such an expression of blank, hopeless, helpless despair as I never before saw depicted on any face. I had thus stood silently awaiting the effect of the life or death struggle going on within, for a few moments, when at length he said, "Didn't I tell you to go away? Let me die in peace."

"Are you in peace, my friend?" was my answer. "I know you are not; but I come to speak to you of true peace through the blood of Jesus Christ, which 'cleanseth us from all sin.' Come, be honest with yourself. You know you are far from peace." An indistinct sentence was the reply. I could only catch the words, "Not for me." Taking for granted the remainder of the sentence, I said, "Yes, *for you*—for you is this Saviour sent. Hear his own words,"—and producing my pocket Bible, and turning to the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, I read slowly the several verses of the chapter to the end of the seventh, when his

eyes were lifted towards me, and met mine with a full, steadfast, and now inquiring gaze. Repeating that verse, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," I closed the book, saying, "Will you join with me in prayer, that God may show that mercy towards your soul?" His reply, in certainly an ungracious tone, was yet encouraging enough to make me hope that I was not seeking mercy for him in vain. My prayer was short and simple, just asking the mercy that poor soul needed.

I arose from my knees, feeling that it was answered. I was too much overpowered to say more than, "May I come to see you again?"

The man's answer was, "You may come if you like."

Not many days afterwards I again presented myself before Mrs. I——, and on inquiring for her husband she said, "Oh, sir, we have had a terrible time since you were here. Why did you come to disturb the poor man's mind? He was bad enough before, but he has been continually crying out that we are all going to hell—that we shall all be lost for ever. Why did you add that trouble to all we have had to bear before, through his temper, which no one can stand at any time?"

"Is it not better," I said, "he should know of hell now, while there is time to flee from it, than that he should dwell there for ever?" Then I again approached the chamber door. No sooner did William I—— see me, than, sitting up in his bed, with wild and haggard look, he cried, "Oh, sir, go away, go away! Why did you come disturbing me? The devil has been sitting there where you sat, ever since; and I know he is waiting to carry me away to hell! See! there he is."

I said calmly, "Then, Mr. I——, you do not doubt that there is a devil and a hell? But why have you not also thought of heaven's glories, and of Christ Jesus, the sinner's Friend—of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost?"

"Oh, there is no heaven for me. The devil is waiting there to carry me off."

"Hear what God says," I replied: "'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.'"

"Will God draw nigh to me?" he said, his face lighting up as I had not seen it before. "Will God draw nigh to one who has denied his being, has despised his mercy, has profaned his name?"

"Yes," I said, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Only come to God, feeling your sin, your lost condition, and seek his mercy in Jesus Christ, and 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Listen a few moments while I read one of the Saviour's beautiful parables:—'A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I

have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' (Luke xv. 11-24.) Now God is that Father. Why should not you be that prodigal? Draw nigh to God, as he did to his father, and he will draw nigh to you."

"Oh, sir, pray for me," were the words which now burst from him, while his whole frame shook with convulsive sobs. Doubtless it was written of him that day in heaven, "Behold, he prayeth." Angels, too, were doubtless rejoicing over that repenting sinner.

A week or two had passed, and I was sitting by the bedside of a dying woman in another part of the district, when the parish doctor entered the room, and, turning to me, said, "What have you done to Mr. I——, of Duke Street?"

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Well, sir, you seem to have had some wonderful influence upon him.

When I was first called to see him, I found him the most unmanageable patient I ever encountered; and now he is as gentle as a lamb, taking all I give him with thankfulness. And do you know he is now likely to recover, which at one time I thought impossible?"

"I have done nothing," I said, "but preach to him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Holy Ghost has made the word effectual to his conversion from darkness to light. Old things have, I think, passed away, and all things are become new."

I passed through Duke Street, stopping at Mr. I——'s door to ask for him. No longer the look of terror was depicted upon Mrs. I——'s face. She, too, was beginning to awake from her long sleep, to the realization of eternal things, and soon after found peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. I found her husband rapidly regaining strength and health. God had smitten him in mercy, but had now graciously healed him with that balm of Gilead, the precious blood of Christ—the sovereign remedy for the sin-sick soul; and his bodily health also was restored. And God made even his business to prosper; so that he was enabled after a time to retire to a distant part of the country, where, after devoting himself and his substance to the furtherance of the gospel for a few years, he has recently fallen asleep in Jesus.

Reader, may the same grace triumph in you.

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"I SEE! I SEE!"



In the summer of 1860 I was returning one morning from preaching at S—— to my home at C——, on foot.

Soon after leaving S——, on turning round, I saw a man coming, who appeared to be an old tramp. In a minute or two he was by my side. His shoes were slung over his shoulder, and his feet were but half

protected by a pair of old carpet slippers. He had already walked ten miles; and, on my asking him where he was going, he said, "For Keighley wide o' Bradford." I soon learned from him the outlines of his past history.

I asked, "How old are you, my friend?"

"Turned seventy, master," said he.

"Well, have you any prospect of a better world?"

"There's nothing for me but heaven," he replied, in tones of great assurance.

"Indeed!" I said; "what makes you so sure of that?"

"Oh, I've never done no harm, and have always done all the good I could. There can be nothing else for me."

"If what you say be true," I observed, "what shall I do? I have not done all the good I could, but have done a great deal of harm. I have been very bad indeed."

"Have you, master? You don't look like one of that sort."

"You must not take people by their look. I have been so bad that I have broken the whole law of God; have been guilty of very great crimes—even murder, more than once or twice."

This statement quite alarmed the old man; he stood fixing his eyes upon me for a few seconds, and then said, "How is it you are here, then?"

"Oh, we do not always get what we deserve, or I should not be here. You see I am not like you. Now, what must I do?"

Evidently pitying my case, he exclaimed, "Eh, master, I'm capped with it; I don't know what you can do. I can see nothing for it but your turning to be better for the future; then you won't have so many stripes, you know. The Bible says some have few stripes, and some many."

"Where do they go to get the stripes?" I asked.

"Oh," said the old man seriously, "to hell."

"And when they have had their stripes, do they come out again?"

"Nay; they stay there for ever."

"Well, but I do not want to go to hell at all; I want to go to heaven. Can't you tell me how I can get there?"

"Nay, master, I can't. But it isn't true, is it, that you have been so bad?"

Pausing for a minute, and looking him full in the face, I very seriously said, "It is true; and I tell you, *you are quite as bad*, and I can prove it."

With a mingled look of surprise and anger, he earnestly replied, "I'm sure I'm not."

"*You are*; and I can prove it from God's own word. In the Epistle of James it says, 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' (James ii. 10.) Now, tell me candidly, have you ever been tipsy?"

"I've got a sup too much sometimes."

"Have you ever taken God's name in vain?"

"I can't say but I have."

"I daresay you have cursed and swore at times?"

"Yes, I have. I can't deny it."

"You have not spoken the truth always?"

"No, not always."

"Without going any further, you see you have offended in many points; therefore you have broken the whole law of God, and a great many times, too. Just think what another passage says, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' (Gal. iii. 10.) Now, you see by this, that if you had offended but once in all your life, you are under a curse. Now, have you ever been angry with any one, and hated them in your heart?"

He acknowledged he had.

"Then," I said, "in the sight of God you have been guilty of murder; for it says in his word, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' (1 John iii. 15.)"

It was evident that light was dawning upon his mind, as at this

stage of the conversation he wonderingly inquired, "Eh, is it like that?"

"Yes," I said. "And now go back in your mind, and try to recollect your past life, and tell me if you have ever really loved God, for the greatest commandment in the Bible is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.' (Matt. xxii. 37, 39.)"

"Well, I've said my prayers to him sometimes."

"When have you done that, my friend?"

"Oh, when I've been going on the road, I've said, 'Lord, help me through to-day,' and he has done it."

"And have you thanked him?"

"Yes, I have."

"Now, do you think you would have asked him to help you if you had not been afraid you would not have had enough to eat?"

"No, I don't think I should."

"That is not loving God; that's loving yourself. Let me ask one more question. When God has helped you, and you have thanked him, have you studied afterwards how to please him, or have you forgotten him until you were in want again?"

This probing had its designed effect. His conscience became restless, and he began to see things in a different light to that in which he had before seen them. Believing that the Holy Spirit, according to the word of Jesus, was *convincing him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, (John xvi. 8,) I endeavoured to show him that God's law required perfect obedience; that by the works of the law no man living can be justified; that the penalty of violating the law of God was eternal death; that the review of his long life clearly showed that he had in fact rendered no obedience at all; that all his righteousness was as filthy

rags; that his heart had never been right in the sight of God. While thus undeceiving him as to his hopes and false confidence, it was most affecting to witness his emotions. They became more and more intense, till at length, trembling and bursting into tears, he sobbed out, "Eh, master, I'm as bad as you! I'm as bad as you! What shall we do? Oh, what shall we do?"

"Cheer up," said I; "I know what we can do."

"Do ye, master?" said he, with an earnestness that betokened great concern. He felt there was not a moment to spare.

"Yes; we must look to the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard of *him*, haven't you?"

"Yes; didn't he die upon the cross?"

"He did, and was buried; and he rose again, and went back to heaven, and is now seated upon his throne there. He loves sinners such as you and me, and he says to us, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' (Matt. xi. 28;) 'Look unto me, and be ye saved,' (Isa. xlv. 22.) All we have to do is to look unto him, and trust in him, and we shall have the forgiveness of all our sins; and he will give us the Holy Spirit to make us holy and happy, and then take us to heaven."

The announcement that salvation is the free gift of Christ to all who come to him, seemed to the old man "too good to be true;" I therefore added, "I am sure of it, for I have been to him."

With a look of surprise he said, "Have you?"

"Yes, and found it just as Jesus said. I felt myself a great sinner; my whole life had been very bad, and my heart very wicked. I saw I could not help myself. Do what I would, I had no rest or peace, day or night, till one evening I went into my

father's garden to be alone with God ; and I thought how holy he was ; how righteous and just ; how good to his creatures, even to those who had sinned against him ; how good he had been to me. And then I thought of his great love, in giving his own beloved Son to die for sinners, that they might be saved. I thought of the wonderful love of Jesus in coming from heaven to suffer so much on our behalf ; and as I said to myself, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*, I felt my whole heart filled with love to him ; and looking up, I said, 'I do believe in thee,' and in a moment I was very happy. And I now expect to go to heaven, not because I have been good, for I have been very bad, as I told you, but *because of what Jesus did and suffered for me.*"

These simple words the poor old convinced sinner listened to with fixed attention, and he said, with hope glistening in his eye, "D'ye think he will save an old sinner like me?" "I am sure he will. It is his work to save. It is just what he delights to do. He saves all that come to him ; for it is said, 'He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' (Heb. vii. 25.) And again, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' (John vi. 37.) 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ;

and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' (Isa. liii. 5, 6.) He died, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' (1 Pet. iii. 18.)" As I showed him that Jesus had done and suffered all *for us*, and had left us nothing to do or suffer, his countenance brightened, and with much animation he frequently exclaimed, "I ne'er saw it like that before." As we discoursed further on this glorious theme, the old man would stop, as if lost in thought, and then resuming the walk, would say, "I see ! I see !" How true it is that "the entrance of God's word giveth light !"

Presently, making a dead halt, and striking the ground with his stick, he said, with great emphasis and joy : "Bless him ! He will save me ! I do love him ! I do that ! I do believe in him !"

After a pause he said, "To think I should have met you this morning ! It seems as if you had been sent on purpose."

"Yes ; and to think of the love of the LORD JESUS in meeting you, and making you happy !"

We had now about a mile and a half to walk ere we parted. We could neither speak nor think of aught but Jesus, and what he had done for us.

I offered him my hand. He took it, and said, "We shall soon be in heaven, and I shall know you again when we are there. I can't be long here ; I shall know you when you come." Then joyfully alluding to our blessed Saviour, he said, "*Bless him ! Bless him !*" and we parted.

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THE RED TESTAMENT.



IN the first Home Mission district I visited, now thirty years ago, I found a young Englishman from "the black country," an iron and steel grinder, who was a great drunkard and gambler, and a most savage fighter with both his hands and his feet. No man could have surpassed him in profane swearing. He could not read a word, and

had had a most wretched and godless upbringing. Deserted by his father, and left with a shiftless mother, he had to begin the battle of life in his seventh year. His blood seemed to be boiling with the sense of wrong, and all within him was in fierce mutiny against God and man. He had some good points, however: he had a strong nature and

rare will-power ; he did not fear the face of man, and he was thoroughly straightforward and outspoken.

He had a terrible temper, especially after his drinking and gambling. His sin-stung conscience, or, more likely, his wounded pride, was ever torturing him, so that his life was a hurricane or tornado, with very few pauses or calms. His passionate pugilism had more than once brought his life and liberty into great danger. His wife told me that she sometimes put her head out of the window, looked up to the sky, and implored God to have mercy on her, as she feared John would kill her before morning. Her fears were certainly not imaginary. Both she and her little child, like everything else in the house, bore sad marks of his violence. Her terror and grief under his cruelty, she told me, first moved her to seek Christ.

A quiet, delicate lady was district visitor where he dwelt. John felt himself more than a match for me, but he had to reckon with her also. She upset his theory of religion. She was not an apprentice-parson ; she made no money out of religion, but spent money of her own upon it. Then her spirit and actions wonderfully propitiated his own socialistic notions. She had carried his baby in her arms, and had shown sisterly feeling to his wife. He could demolish my arguments, he thought, but he found it not so easy to overthrow the argument of her unselfish and Christ-like behaviour.

Then the kingdom of God came very near him from another side. His wife, almost heart-broken, and fearing that any night might be her last, "surrendered herself to Christ," as she phrased it. John closely cross-questioned her about her conversion, which, as he saw, had done great good to her and to his home. Here was another flesh-and-blood argument in favour of the Faith,

which staggered his infidelity. He could not now denounce religion as a ghostly, far-off, and hateful thing.

It was not John's habit to spend the Saturday night in his own house. Often he would not come home till Sabbath morning, and then without one farthing of his ample wages, for he was a first-rate skilled workman. Often he and his wife were literally starving for food. At last her prayer was so far answered, for he became a teetotaller. He took this step with characteristic energy. Three or four times a day he used to drink in a public-house near his foundry. One day he found a saddled horse at the door, and the publican within, ready to start for a ride. Looking at him for a minute or two, John said,—

"Well, I'm the biggest fool in all creation. Here am I working hard and in rags, and you are a very fine gentleman, with a prancing horse at your door ; and I am giving you my money to keep up this grandeur of yours. From this day you'll never get a farthing of mine."

John left the whisky shop without a drop, and kept that resolve till his dying day.

Their child grew sick and died. The lady visitor gently helped to smooth the baby's pillow. Only three were at the funeral, and it was a very strange scene. The little coffin lay on the dresser, and the little corpse on the table. John would not place the corpse in the coffin. His wife urged him, but he would not. His face and frame bore traces of an agony within. The struggle between God's will and his stubborn will had now reached the crisis, and the act of yielding had somehow got identified in his mind with the coffin. At last I offered to lay the little body in its last cradle. John then came forward and did it, with much agitation. After the funeral service, he said solemnly,—

"I have not done my duty to him" (pointing to the coffin), "nor to her there" (pointing to his wife), "but I hope that God will forgive me: more than that, I know he has forgiven me."

That was all John ever said about his conversion. His dead self and his dead son were buried—so it seemed—in the same grave. As with many more, the death of the child had brought life to the father.

Up to this time, with the one exception of his "kirking," he had not ventured beyond mission and temperance meetings, but on the first Sabbath after the funeral he was in church, and ere long he was admitted to the Lord's table.

John's conversion produced a sensation. He was a wonder to his neighbours, and most of all to his fellow-workmen. He was no half man on the side of Christ, and he had plenty of courage.

His great powers of resolution were tested. He had a fierce struggle, he told me, with the drink. He had "fits" of temptation, when his whole body grew restless and itched with the old thirst, and he trembled lest the accursed craving should master him. At such a time he dared not pass a whisky shop, and sometimes when in perfect health he lay in bed all day rather than run the risk. When his child died, his lady visitor presented him with a large type red-edged New Testament. For brevity's sake I have called it "The Red Testament."

That book was his companion for the remaining twenty-five years of his life. It was always under his arm as he went to church, prayer-meeting, or the homes of the outcast. From it he read every night as long as he lived, and from it his wife read to him as he entered the last valley.

John had his Red Testament carefully covered with stout black morocco. He told the story of the book to the man who covered it, and

laid hold of him in his own masterful way, and won him for Christ.

The new spiritual instincts of John and his wife, as well as the happy Home Mission work around them, fostered in this pair a desire to serve Christ among the poor. A few doors off, a lonely unfortunate, whose exceptional beauty had been the occasion of her ruin, lay a-dying in uttermost need. John's wife timidly entered the foul room, and found, upon a little straw, a wasted form on her knees, with hands clasped in prayer. "Oh," she said, in heart-melting tones, "I am praying to God to send me some friend. Are you that friend?" "Yes," was the reply. Annie was soon placed on a comfortable bed, and tasted the sweetness of ministering Christian love. During the remaining six weeks of her life, John every day sent her from his own plate a part of his dinner; and right glad was he to lead her to the Saviour of "the woman who was a sinner." John had a little tent in the works where he sharpened the workmen's tools. He soon made his tent a pulpit, for he covered it within and without with his favourite texts.

John believed that at least a part of his debt to Christ should be paid to such outcasts as he himself had been. His way was to attach himself to the very wildest men he knew, and do his utmost to win them. He urged them to become total abstainers at once, but always told them that that was but a stepping-stone to living faith in Christ. He clave unto drunkards who were in danger of destruction, and sometimes when appealing to them he burst into tears. Some of them wept with him. An old fellow-workman, hearing of his illness, came a distance of forty-five miles to thank John for having rescued him. On the funeral day, two fellow-workmen claimed it as their right to

carry John's body from the house to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave—the one at the head and the other at the feet. They had both been very wild men, and had both been plucked by John out of the fire, and ever after they had been his bosom-friends.

Some four years after his conversion he removed to Glasgow, and for many years I was his pastor. A most regular and attentive worshipper was he, with wife and children and Red New Testament.

I well remember visiting John one evening; it would be some ten years after his conversion. The Red Testament was lying on the centre of the table, as it ever lay at the centre of his whole life.

"Mr. Wells, do you know that book?" he said, with a triumphant gesture, as he lifted the Red Testament.

"Yes, John, I have seen that book before."

"Well, I would not part with it for its weight in gold. That's the book on which God the Holy Ghost taught me to read. No one else could have done it. My wife can tell you that I began on that book like a little child, with a, b = ab. It was desperate work, but by the grace of God I mastered it. I never rested till I could read that book for myself."

One day I visited John's wife, who was sick. "You remember the time," she said, "when I was really afraid that John would take my life? Well, he has nursed me during this illness as kindly as my mother ever nursed me when I was a child. It's

really wonderful what God's grace can do. It has turned the lion into the lamb in our John."

During four years of poor health he struggled on with great heroism. He was determined not to be a burden to the societies of which he was a member. But at last his strong right hand forgot its cunning.

In his last days he drew solace and strength from his Red Testament. When he grew too weak to read, his wife, at his request, opened the precious volume and read his favourite passages.

"Are you ready, John?" she asked him, as the end drew near.

"Yes, thank God," he replied; "that was all settled with me twenty-five years ago."

When I called after the funeral, the Red Testament was lying on the dresser. I took it up and turned over its leaves. Its well-thumbed pages, as soft as blotting-paper, from much handling, spoke eloquently of John's ceaseless study of the Word of God, by which he had been guided through life's changing journey into the changeless home at its close.

Reader, the same grace that triumphed in John, is offered to you through Jesus Christ; and if you heartily receive it, it will do for you all it has done for the rescued in every age. The parable of the Prodigal Son teaches that he who receives grace gives God joy. Will you deny him that joy?

—(Abridged by permission from "Rescuers and Rescued," by REV. JAMES WELLS, M.A.; published by Hodder & Stoughton.)

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“THE TIME PAST OF OUR LIFE.”



See page 3.

SOLOMON was led to write, “*God requireth that which is past.*” We may forget former days and years, with all their events, sins, and sorrows; but God does not. A battlefield presents awful scenes of wreck and ruin; but every trace of blood is soon covered over, and next spring’s grass and verdure make the former year’s scenes forgotten. It is different, however, altogether with us in regard to the scenes and circumstances of our life from infancy on to our latest breath. God keeps a record of thoughts, words, and deeds; and on the Great Day will touch our memories, and bring vividly before us all the past. “The

Books were opened," (Rev. xx. 12,) in John's vision of the Judgment and the Judge; the record of the Judge, infallibly accurate, will be found to answer, page by page, to the record which our quickened memory will present.

Now, if on that day your sins are found recorded as they were committed, without any note to the effect that you sought the Saviour, and carried all these sins of heart and life to him, that his atoning blood might blot out all, how will you appear? John, in Rev. vi. 17, tells us that unsaved, unpardoned sinners shall on that day ask the question which none can answer, "Who shall be able to stand?"

"*God shall judge the secrets of men* by Jesus Christ," (Rom. ii. 16,) is an awful truth to the sinner whose sins have not been cast into the depths of the sea. There shall be a resurrection of "*the time past of your life!*" There is a remarkable germinant power in seeds, so that many times these seeds, after lying dormant for hundreds of years, have at the touch of air and rain and sunshine sprung up into life. Even thus your dormant conscience and memory shall be quickened that day. You shall be reminded of the messages God sent, the offers of salvation made to you year after year; solemn shadows cast over you by the death of friends; earth's cisterns broken in mercy, that you might be in a manner compelled to resort to the Fountain of Living Water. You will remember well times when the Spirit made you feel your sin and danger, when you saw for a moment, as when a flash of lightning at sea reveals the hidden rocks to which the ship is drifting fast, that you were ready to perish, and yet might be saved. You will remember how often the voice of the Saviour called: "I would have gathered you, and you would not." No wonder that it

is written in regard to such, who neglected the great salvation, and who heard, as men who stood outside would hear, in Noah's day, the loud sound of the shutting door, that the long-suffering God had risen up, and had shut to the door,—no wonder, we say, that it is written, "they sought to enter in and *were not able!*" (Luke xiii. 24;) and no wonder that it is said, "these shall GO AWAY into everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv. 46.) They will "*go away*" self-condemned, hanging their heads, beating their breasts, and gnashing their teeth in the agonies of self-reproach and despair.

But there are pleasant phenomena connected with the "*past times of life*" that might be illustrated in your case. At the beginning of another year, stand still and consider. The seeds sown in your memory are not dead; they have wonderful vitality. Perhaps you sometimes find a long-past scene come up before you as you muse at the fireside, or as you walk in the country. Have there not been Communion seasons at which you were present, when you were "almost persuaded"? Why were *you* spared when that companion of yours was struck down at your very side? Think of the kindnesses heaped upon you by the Lord. It may be that even to-day you shall rise up and open the door to Him who has in time past so often knocked. Only remember, there must be decision, and that quickly.

There is a time, we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path—
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

O where is that mysterious bourne
By which our life is crossed,
Beyond which God himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?

How far may we go on in sin?
 How long will God forbear?
 Where does hope end, and where begin
 The confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent:
 Ye that from God depart,
 While it is called "to-day," repent,
 And harden not your heart.

Let me tell you an interesting story of one who, two hundred years ago, was led to Christ and to rest, while musing on "the time past of his life." His name was Luke Short. One Sabbath afternoon, the well-known John Flavel, then at Dartmouth, preached upon 1 Cor. xvi. 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*." He was enabled to preach with deep earnestness and intense feeling. As he went on, he pressed the words home to his hearers' hearts, and spoke to this effect: "Alas! alas! some of you after all will not love him! I must change my note, I must deliver a message unto you that I am loath to deliver, but my Lord and Master requires it of me, in order that I may deliver the whole counsel of God. It is that needful message, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*!' i.e. let him be accursed of God till the Lord shall come and judge him. If any one, whether male or female, high or low, rich or poor, old or young, love not the Lord Jesus Christ above everything in the world, let them, says the word and majesty of God, be *Anathema Maranatha*—accursed of God, the curse of God resting till the Lord come and execute the fullness of his wrath upon them." As the man of God was speaking, the whole assembly was solemnized, nay, struck into a sort of consternation, some affected on their own account, some at the thought of their children and friends. One gentleman sank back in his seat, like one dead, in awful distress of soul.

But, as on all such occasions, there were those in the congregation who passed through this solemn scene unmoved, or merely for the moment surprised and awed. Among these was a lad of fifteen, Luke Short; he went home and forgot it all. Soon after, he went out to America as a settler, fixing his abode at Marblehead, and then removed to Middleborough, in Massachusetts. Years passed on, and you would have found him busy with his farm, and with nothing higher. He had uncommon health, and his life was protracted to an unusual length. He reached his hundredth year, and still retained strength enough to do some work on his farm, while his mental faculties were very little impaired. But, says the old narrative, he was still utterly careless of his soul. He was really *a sinner an hundred years old*, and apparently ready to be *accursed*. (Isa. lxxv. 20.) One day, as he sat in the field, he began to muse on the past. His thoughts reached back to the days of his youth, and the days he had spent in England. The current of meditation carried him to Dartmouth, and to the days when John Flavel was his minister. His memory recalled distinctly that remarkable Sabbath there when Flavel's sermon so affected the audience. Much of it he was able to remember. The affectionate earnestness of the preacher's manner, the important truth he delivered, and the deep and solemn effects on those present, all rose up fresh before him. He sat wrapped in meditation; and that day's meditation was so blessed to him, that none could doubt that the Spirit of God wrought on his soul. He felt that he had "not loved the Lord Jesus Christ;" he felt himself exposed to the dreadful *Anathema Maranatha*. He was convinced of sin, and led to inquire after the way of pardon. After a time, he found what he sought; and obtained peace through the blood

of the Cross, and was seen walking "in the paths of righteousness." He became a member of the church in Middleborough, and lived a consistent Christian life for sixteen years. It is credibly stated that he died in his hundred and sixteenth year.

The seed of the word had not lost its vitality in that man's heart, though it had lain dormant eighty-four years. Our long-suffering God waited for that man, and took him, after a career of unbelief prolonged for a hundred years! He is "waiting to be gracious" to you this day, (Isa. xxx. 18,)—to you who read these lines. Accept "the gift" of eternal life held out for your acceptance, and go on your way, this year and evermore, "rejoicing."

Only think what it is to be lost! "Without God, without Christ, without hope," for ever and ever. For one to be without God, and to *feel that he is without God*, will be to sink down into the depths of hell. That lost soul is left desolate, left to "weep and wail and gnash his teeth" unheeded. No one cares for him. It was double gloom that darkened Joseph's cell when he found, day after day, that there were no tidings from the chief butler; it was midnight gloom to feel, "he has forgotten me!" But this is the portion of the lost soul—sent to that prison that shall never more be opened, and *forgotten by God*. For so it is written, (Jer. xxiii. 39 :) "*Behold I, even I, will utterly forget you.*" It is sad enough to hear Job say of such, "The womb shall forget him, he shall be remembered no more,"

(xxiv. 20,)—his own mother even letting him drop out of thought and memory; but there is a non-remembrance far more terrible; *God says, "I, even I, will utterly forget you."* You will be like the prisoner flung into the subterranean dungeon of yon castle, out of sight and out of thought, left to starve, and die, and rot; only you live there for ever, often recalling happier days, and hopes for ever gone.

The missionary Dr. Judson, one day speaking to his Burmese teacher, referred to the death of a person well known to them both, and added,—

"His soul is lost, I fear."

"Why so?"

"He was not a disciple of Christ."

"How do you know? You could not see his soul."

"No; but how do you know whether the root of the mango-tree is good? You cannot see the root, but you judge by the fruit you see on its branches. Now, I know that Mr. I. was not a disciple of Christ, because his words and actions were not those of a disciple."

"And so all that are not disciples of Christ are lost?"

"Yes; all, whether Burmese, or of any other country."

"*This is hard!*"

"Yes, it is hard indeed; and that is just the reason why I have come to tell you of Christ."

It is an awful truth: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) It was a saying of even heathens: "Punishment follows sin as surely as the wheel of the cart follows the footsteps of the ox."

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ROBERT MOFFAT.



From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry.

THE world has not often seen a more apostolic man than was Robert Moffat, the missionary. In this aspect he stood prominent before the Christian nations for the greater part of a century. His face, too, in his later years, was singularly apostolic, as if the spirit of John the Evangelist dwelt there. He suffered much in bearing witness for Christ, and is worthy to be named with the best of faithful martyrs, although indeed he had not the martyr's privilege of dying a violent death. And in all his sufferings there was a very Christ-like inter-

mingling of courage and quietude; so that it was only by a kind of stealth the world came to know that he suffered at all for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

He was born at Ormiston, near Haddington, December 21, 1795, the same year in which was founded the London Missionary Society, which he served so well. His parents were godly but plain people, as in the case of so many eminent Scotchmen. As usual, it was the mother's influence that was most fruitful of good, and lasted longest; her religion was of a stern type, but her heart was tender.

The family removed to Portsoy, then to Carronshore on the Firth of Forth, where Robert went to school. His education, though scanty, was perhaps the most suitable he could have got. His only school-book was the Shorter Catechism; and, after learning the "A B C" printed on the cover, his next stage in learning, (and he had no need ever to get beyond it,) was "Man's chief end," and the glory of God!

Moffat used to speak kindly of "Wully" Mitchell, his schoolmaster, who in his *one only* arm wielded severity enough for ten—a severity which Moffat could better appreciate in memory long after than at the time; and the result was that he fled from school, took to sea, and made several voyages as a cabin-boy.

By and by he lost liking for the sea, and at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to a gardener. He had a very alert mind and robust frame, and, as he grew up to manhood, these were in various ways exercised, so as to fit him the better for his missionary services in after years.

He applied himself to learn something of everything within his reach. He learned to play the fiddle, was fond of athletics, became an excellent swimmer; and on one occasion, at the hazard of his life, rescued a com-

panion who had sunk in deep water. This was typical of his whole career. He was heroic in all he did, but so quietly that most people failed to see where the heroism was. By his prowess in the water he astonished the natives, when, in his first African journey, he swam across the Orange River, a distance of five hundred yards, and they exclaimed, "Were you born in the great sea-water?"—as if in doubt whether he was more of a fish than a man.

The crisis of his life came when he was about sixteen years of age. He then left home for a situation in Cheshire, and, on parting from his mother, she entreated him to promise that he would read a chapter in the Bible every morning, and another every evening.

He said, "Mother, you know I read my Bible."

She answered, "I know you do; but you do not read it regularly, or as a duty you owe to God, its Author." And she added, "Now I shall return home with a happy heart, inasmuch as you have promised to read the Scriptures daily. O Robert, my son, read much in the New Testament, read much in the Gospels—the blessed Gospels! Then you cannot well go astray. If you pray, the Lord himself will teach you."

So spake the good woman; and he tells us he never forgot his promise to his mother. It was one evening, while doing what she told him to do, that the light and peace of conversion came into his soul. He was reading the New Testament. He had been in spiritual distress for many weeks, struggling between hope and despair; but now the Word came to him with remarkable clearness. With a heart nearly broken, he exclaimed, "Can it be possible that I have never understood what I have been reading?" Speaking of it long after, he said, "The Book of God, the precious undying Bible,

seemed to be laid open, and I saw at once what God had done for the sinner. I felt that, being justified by faith, I had peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ."

Shortly afterwards, when he was in Warrington on some trifling matter of business, a placard on the wall announcing a missionary meeting caught his eye. He read it; he stood still, and pondered. It was the first announcement of the kind he had ever seen. The meeting was past, but the subject filled his heart. To use his own expression, "it turned his brains." He went away, transacted his business, came back to the same spot, and there fixed, before God, what his future course was to be: he had resolved to be a missionary to the heathen.

After some time spent in Manchester, preparing himself for this work, he was accepted by the London Missionary Society, and ordained along with eight others, amongst whom was John Williams, the hero of South Sea Missions. Moffat was appointed to South Africa, where he arrived in 1817.

Five months he had to wait for permission to enter the interior; and when at length the journey was begun, more difficulties and dangers were met with than can well be described. Some of the Dutch farmers on the way were very kind; others less so. One declared he would as soon call in the dogs as call in his Hottentot slaves, when the missionary was about to conduct evening worship. But when Moffat began to speak from the words, "Truth, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table," the old farmer felt rebuked, ordered his slaves to be brought inside the house, where they had never been before, and said to his guest, "My friend, you took a hard hammer, and you have broken a hard head."

Such was Moffat's unfailing tact in dealing with men, civilised or savage. His relations with Afrikaner is an old story, but a very beautiful one. This was one of the native chiefs, a wild robber, outlawed, with a high price on his head. The Boer women shed tears at the thought of Moffat, a handsome lad not yet twenty-two, venturing to beard this notorious "lion" in his den; but in spite of all warnings, calmly and quietly he went, found the chief not unfriendly, and had a house built for him in half-an-hour.

The presence of the young missionary operated on this man like a charm. Gradually Afrikaner became as a little child. Tenderly, as a mother might do, he nursed Moffat through a severe illness;—went with him to the Cape in after years, and was recognised there as a wonderful trophy of reform, by the grace of God, in civil and political as well as in religious things.

Meanwhile, in the early stages of the work, Moffat had his hardships of various kinds. For food, he had only a little milk, morning, noon, and night. For shelter, what he had was almost worse than none. "When the sun shone, it was unbearably hot; when the rain fell, I came in for a share of it; when the wind blew, I had frequently to decamp to escape the dust; and, in addition to these little inconveniences, any hungry cur of a dog that wished a night's lodging would force itself through the frail wall, and not unfrequently deprive me of my expected meal for the coming day,—and I have more than once found a serpent coiled up in a corner."

But greater trials met him in connection with his work. He saw no progress—lost heart—felt lonely and desolate, and would go out among the granite rocks, in the stillness of the evening, seeking consolation in his God, in his violin, and in

his mother's favourite hymn, "Awake, my soul, in joyful lays."

After about two years he was married to Mary Smith, a noble helpmeet, daughter of a former employer. Before he left home their hearts were united, as their names now are, and will always be—"Robert and Mary Moffat."

He then went to Bechuana Land, where he and she laboured for the long period of fifty years. When five years had passed with no visible fruit, he reviewed, with his wife, the prospects of the work and state of the people: "We preach, we converse, we catechize, we pray, but without the least apparent success."

Still undaunted, he learned better to speak to the people in their own tongue, and continued in the work for ten years longer before any sign of progress appeared. It was a long time to wait, and only the most admirable Christian fortitude could have done it. But patience was at length amply rewarded, by the sudden outbreak of a great spiritual revival; and the moral wilderness began to blossom as the rose.

In the course of his long life among them, he made of the naked savages a civilised Christian community; taught them the useful arts—to build houses, to till the ground and water it, to make implements for domestic and outdoor use. He reduced their language to grammar; taught them to read and write; introduced the printing-press among them; composed educational primers, and more advanced books of instruction; translated for them catechisms,

tracts, books of devotion, and hymns; taught them to sing; and, finally, gave them the whole of the Bible in their own tongue.

Speaking of the time when he had just ended this last immense labour, he says: "I could hardly believe that I was in the world, so difficult was it to realize that the work of so many years was completed. Whether it was from weakness or over-strained exertion, I cannot tell, but a feeling came over me as if I should die, and I felt perfectly resigned."

In 1841, Moffat visited England, when a great meeting was held in Edinburgh to welcome him, at which his father and mother were present. On his return home again finally, in 1870, his wife died. In 1872, Edinburgh University honoured him, and itself not less, by granting him the title of Doctor in Divinity. In 1875 he lectured on Missions in Westminster Abbey, an exceptional privilege. In 1887, August 9, he died, full of years and honours; and was buried in Norwood Cemetery.

He was a brave man, and withal singularly quiet and unpretending, in whom the love of God and patience of Christ, in their own simplicity, were more than usually manifest.

Reader, there is for you, and for every poor sinner, as there was for him, the Word of God for conversion, the mercy of God for pardon, and the grace of God for help in every kind of service and in every time of need,—blessings which are unboundedly free, rich, and everlasting. "Ho! every one, come!" (Isaiah lv. 1.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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MAKING A MOCK AT SIN.



See page 3.

SIN is the worst kind of foolishness. It is a mad thing to do ; and but for a blinded understanding no one would ever be guilty of it. It puts the cart before the horse. It puts the jug bottom upwards while attempting to fill it. Sin is the worst kind of foolishness.

But the worst kind of sin is that which makes a mock at it, tampers

and trifles with it, and regards it as a thing more to be laughed at than to be condemned and dreaded. This is the worst kind of sin, because it gives an open door and a welcome to every other.

When we consider that the all-wise God, in the person of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for sin on the bitter cross, we can under-

stand what force of truth there is in the Scripture when it declares that "fools make a mock at sin." (Proverbs xiv. 9.) Fools indeed they must be ! Of such fools there are—

1. *Those who deny its existence.*—They say there is no sin. They say there is no God, and no soul, and no eternity. They say we are no more to blame for our wrong-doing than a rock is to blame when it happens to get loose on the hill-side and rolls down crashing to the bottom. We are no more to blame for our transgressions than the clouds are for their changefulness.

So some men would fain have us to believe. It may well be doubted whether they can themselves believe it. We all have an inward witness to the truth. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) A man might as well say he has no head on his shoulders as say he has no soul, and no responsibility, and no sin.

This is one class of those fools who make a mock at sin. Again, there are—

2. *Those who make light of it because of its smallness.*—A little sin is not worth noticing. A white lie counts for nothing, but the fun of it. Just half a glass for the sake of good fellowship. Don't be afraid. The company may not be very good, but you will only be a short while in it. Come, let us have a jolly little time ; it will be soon ended and soon forgotten, and no harm done.

Men sometimes talk and tempt one another in this rash way. As though a small slip on the edge of the precipice might be despised on account of its smallness ; and as though a spark in the neighbourhood of gunpowder were harmless for being only a spark ! "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth ! And the tongue is a fire . . . and it is set on fire of hell ; . . . it is an

unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James iii. 5-8.)

Of the fools who mock at sin there are—

3. *Those who make light of its consequences.*—In the heat of passion, how blind one can be to all beyond the present moment—how reckless of what may be the fruits of his violence in word or deed ! The sinner is often guilty of this wilful blindness and recklessness. He takes no warning. He brooks no restraint. If others have been ruined by indulgence, that is no reason why he should not escape. It all depends on the management ; and somehow, he thinks, he will succeed in cheating sin out of its wages. Talk not to him of its consequences ! It is very pleasant while it lasts,—and when it is done, it is done,—when it is past, it is past !

There are sin-made fools of this class, who think they can make fools of sin, and fancy that with lapse of time sin will forget to take its wages, or grow too feeble to exact them. So they will tell you that you need not take sin too seriously.

But what does God's word say on the point ?—"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know. . . it shall not be well with the wicked ; . . . because he feareth not before God." (Eccl. viii. 11-13.) "Whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him." (Eccl. x. 8.) "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Proverbs xxix. 1.)

Of the fools who mock at sin there are—

4. *Those who mean to take just one more indulgence before giving it up.*—Perhaps some reader of this tract has been saying adieu to the same sin almost every day for the last twenty

or thirty years. When he said at first he would do it only once more, and then have done with it for ever, he was only half in earnest. It was a piece of mockery; though perhaps he did not regard it in that light. And of course sin is not to be subdued in this half-hearted way; nor is the help of the grace of God to be expected unless one be in *dead earnest* when he talks of breaking free from sinful habits. How, then, does it stand with the man who has been dallying so long with his besetting sin? It now clings to him like a leprosy. And however much inclined he may be to say farewell to it—it refuses to say farewell to *him*. “The last state of that man is worse than the first.” (Matt. xii. 45.)

Of the fools who mock at sin there are—

5. *Those who indulge it spitefully.*—Many a one, after being ruined by a long course of evil-doing, has confessed,—“I took to sin, not for the love of it. I wished to vex the friends who had offended me. I was angry, and did not care what I did. And once the evil habit was begun, in this thoughtless and spiteful way, it seemed to take the mastery of me, and could not be resisted. It began in mockery; it has ended in misery and ruination.”

Many such there are, perverse sons or daughters; perverse husbands or wives; perverse fathers or mothers, who in a fit of temper take the fatal plunge into bad habits, or into bad company, where, as in a whirlpool, they are carried away “into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” (1 Tim. vi. 9.)

Of the fools who mock at sin there are—

6. *Those who indulge it playfully,* as a gentleman in India once did with a pet tiger. He had nurtured it from being a cub. It was now his constant companion and play-

fellow. One day, as his hand lay carelessly over the back of the chair, the animal came and licked it, until the rough tongue broke the skin and the blood came. He felt a prickly sensation, looked and saw what had happened, and saw also that the ferocity of the brute's nature had been roused by the first taste of blood. He dared not, for his life, withdraw his hand; and but for a loaded pistol which happened to be near, that playfully-indulged beast would soon have made an end of him.

It is not unlikely that Gehazi, Jezebel, Judas, began to play with the tiger in the sportive period of their youth; then the tiger began to play *with them*—too rudely; but how could they help it, once they were in its power? and finally, it had their life's blood.

“Fools make a mock at sin.” They think they can do what they like with it. They make it the subject of their jokes. But not long till it is past all joking, and they are visited with a fearful retribution.

Young lads are frequently led astray by this impious kind of playfulness. If not in private dwellings, in workshops and public offices they come in contact with men whose delight it is to make sin interesting and amusing, as if it were a thing to be laughed at and trifled with.

The lad leaves, perhaps, the circle of a pious family, to enter on a business career. He may have met with a good deal of evil at school, amongst other boys like himself; but he is scarcely prepared for the temptations that now assail him, coming as they do with the more power, because they come from grown-up people whom he is naturally inclined to respect and imitate.

The blasphemous language he hears is bad enough, but far worse are the insidious expressions used for the purpose of making sin diverting. And the men who use these have

often a fiendish pleasure in watching the effect of them upon a fresh and uncontaminated youthful mind.

The terrible risk is that the spirit of the poor lad may come to be delighted with what formerly disgusted him—breathing, as he is compelled to do, five or six whole days every week, a pestilent atmosphere, where sin is spoken of, or practised, as every young man's appropriate amusement.

To check this, the best a pious home can do, and Sunday school and Bible class and services of public worship can do, however good, may be of no avail. The fine natural capabilities of the boy are withered up and rendered impossible, as the progress of a budding flower is checked for ever when it comes in contact with flame.

Nor is this the worst that may happen. The lad may begin to take a shameless pride in destroying others younger than himself, teaching them, as he himself has been taught, to make a mock at sin.

How callous the public mind can be in regard to this! If ten thousand of our brave youth were slain in battle, or swept into their graves by some dreadful pestilence, week by week, year by year, we should not have so much to mourn over as there actually is by this secret curse of viewing sin in a light-minded and playful way.

How awful sin must be! It shed the blood of Jesus; and it needs nothing less than that precious blood to wash it away. There are no small sins. There are no laughable ones.

If it is sin at all, it is, for being sin, of all mad things the maddest, and of all unkind things the cruellest.

Christ is our Deliverer. He has vanquished sin. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

Fathers and mothers, whose hearts tremble for the safety of your children when they go forth into the world, you have, through Christ, a sure and blessed hope for yourselves and for them! Your prayers are not in vain; nor the gracious influences of a pious home. The bread cast on the waters will come back to you, though it may be after many days.

To you, penitent soul, who have mocked at sin and derided the gospel, and the blessed God, and the Saviour, and that dread eternity which awaits you, and have well-nigh quenched the Holy Ghost in you,—to you that same Spirit of the lowly and loving Saviour speaks at this moment, as he once did to a very helpless human being: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John v. 14.)

Hearken, ye who are not penitent: "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. Then shall ye remember your evil ways,—and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight." "But as for them whose heart walketh after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 31; xi. 21.)

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JOSEPH; OR, THE SILENT CORNER.



THE little rural spot at Rochdale called "the Wood," on the banks of the Roche, near the old stone bridge, has long been the favourite resort of invalids. One beautiful evening in May, a tall, handsome young man was leaning against one of the three stone posts that divide the walk in the wood from the field called Sparrow Hill. That he was poor was

evident. He had in his hand a few gathered flowers, on which he was looking with apparent pleasure. His fine figure, intelligent countenance, and the unmistakeable indications to an experienced eye, that he was a doomed man, increased my desire to form his acquaintance.

"So, you are fond of flowers, I presume? I have heard it said that

invalids see greater beauty in flowers than those in good health ; is it so, my dear sir ?" I asked.

"I think it is," he quietly answered, with a smile. "But do you consider me an invalid ?"

"That was my first impression on seeing you ; but I shall be glad if I am mistaken."

"You are not mistaken, and I am glad you have spoken to me, for I am very lonely, and very miserable. Twelve years I have worked in the cotton mills ; but for several weeks I have not been able to follow my employment, and now I am in a common lodging-house, with two shillings from the parish as my only support."

On the following evening I called, and found Joseph greatly distressed. All his prospects were gloomy ; nothing but an early death in the workhouse was before him, and he wished he had never been born.

At our next interview he entered into many particulars of his life, honestly confessing that much of his present misery was the result of his own folly. Speaking of his earlier days, he said :—

"My mother was then alive, and she seemed anxious that I should early imbibe religious impressions. She regularly attended the church, and had a great regard for the Sabbath day. She would read to me stories from good books, and many times prayed with me when father was not at home. I well remember how she began to look very pale when she heard the doctor tell her that she could not get better. The day before mother died, she presented me with her pocket Bible and her wedding-ring. She requested me to kneel down, while she offered up for me her last prayer. She then took hold of my hand, and made me promise never to leave the Sunday school, never to neglect reading the Bible, and, lastly, to

meet her in heaven. I promised her all she wished ;—from my breaking heart I promised her, and I intended to perform all I promised.

"For four years I daily read my mother's Bible, regularly attended the Sunday school, and every day prayed that I might meet mother in heaven. But one Sunday a terrible misfortune befell me. I was telling the boy next me which verse he had to read, when the teacher struck my forehead with the edge of the Bible. In a moment he lay sprawling on the floor, and in a moment more I was in the hands of the superintendent, being dragged up to the desk, exposed to the gaze of the whole school, and in ten minutes after publicly expelled. I was for ever disgraced by being turned out of a Sunday school.

"I went from the school to my mother's grave, and, seeing no one near, I lay down on the cold flag, crying, Mother, mother ; what shall I do ? I promised you never to leave the Sunday school, but they have driven me away. I would have done anything to have been once again in my place, for the sake of the promise I had made my mother. But I had no one to sympathise with me.

"From that day I felt myself an outcast. My Sundays, which had formerly been my greatest comfort, were now the days of my greatest misery. I soon became changed in my feelings, and felt that my heart was getting hard. I forgot to read my Bible, and soon after went to bed without saying my prayers. About this time I removed to Burnley, and for six years have led a wild and dissipated life."

"How long is it since you came to Rochdale, Joseph ?"

"About two years since. I worked eighteen months, but for the last six months I have been in very poor health, and have kept sinking, both in body, mind, and

circumstances. I wish I had no soul, and then to die would be a blessing."

"What have you done with your mother's Bible and wedding-ring, Joseph?"

"I could not keep the Bible after I commenced a life of sin. I knew it condemned all my actions. I purposely left it in a lodging-house, and have sold the ring for bread."

"I feared your Bible would be gone, and have brought you another." On handing it to him, he carelessly opened it, and, seeing the corners of four leaves all turned down to the same verse—Isaiah lv. 7—he read the passage, and again closed the book, saying, "It is of no use, 'the harvest is past.'"

"You made your dying mother three promises, Joseph; two of them you have broken, but the third need not be broken—you may meet her in heaven."

Joseph quickly rose from his seat, and, turning his face to the window, burst into weeping. I gently laid my hand on his shoulder, and whispered in his ear, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and quietly left the room.

The landlady informed me on my next visit, that for several weeks Joseph had coughed most of the night, and that the lodgers complained they could not sleep. She had therefore cleaned out the room in the back-yard, called the hen-cote, and made him up a small bed. She promised to do all she could to make him comfortable.

I followed her into the yard, and in a very small one-storey building found Joseph laid on his narrow straw bed. I sat down on a three-legged stool,—the only piece of furniture in his room,—and, taking hold of his moist hand, asked him if he heard the words I whispered the night I left him weeping.

"Yes, I heard them; and they have been ringing in my ears ever

since. I am greatly distressed. A few hours since, a little girl, belonging to a kind neighbour, brought me a basin of gruel, and said her mother told her to ask my permission to let her come and read for me. I could not refuse the little thing. She ran home to tell her mother, and was soon back with the Bible wide open at the 103rd Psalm, the place she was to read for me. While the child was reading, I thought my heart would have broken. It was my mother's favourite psalm, and the last I ever heard her read."

"Well, Joseph, you surely see the goodness of God in all this. He has as certainly sent that little girl to read you the Bible as he sent you a Bible to read. I am here, because, being his servant, I must do his work. Everything is conspiring to lead you to the Lamb of God."

"I have very little faith," he replied, "in sick-bed repentance. It is miserable trifling with God's goodness, and often a mockery; for many that have been restored to health have proved worse than before. These being my views, how can I consistently hope for pardon in the eleventh hour? It is against reason."

"Your reasoning, Joseph, is, to a great extent, just; but it leaves you hopeless. Man's salvation depends not on reasoning, but believing. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:' these are God's words, and this is God's plan; and in this plan the amazing love of God is seen. By your reasoning you have shut heaven's door against yourself; but believing will throw it wide open, and, through the shed blood of Christ, poor Joseph Sutcliffe may enter."

Joseph now became greatly agitated. For a considerable time he made no reply. At last he said,

"The thief on the cross; oh, that happy thief!"

"Did the thief reason, Joseph?"

He paused a moment, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

"Did the publican reason, Joseph?" I again asked.

He made no reply; but with trembling anguish he again exclaimed, "Lord, save, or I perish!"

I rose, and, gently laying my hand on his forehead, said, "Did poor sinking Peter reason, Joseph?"

With a look of despair, he sobbed out, "Is there mercy? Is there mercy? Happy thief! Happy thief!"

"Look to the middle cross, Joseph. Take your eye from the thief, and look to Jesus, and hear his dying cry, 'Father, forgive them.'"

That moment I was hurriedly called away to Manchester. I did not see Joseph again till the following day. The first glance at his smiling and happy-looking countenance revealed the glorious change that had taken place. He stretched out both hands, exclaiming, "What will my mother say? I shall now meet her in heaven! Oh that I had the voice of a trumpet! I would proclaim to the world that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' I am the happiest man out of heaven."

"How and when did you obtain this pearl of great price, Joseph?"

"About five o'clock this morning. All night I prayed and sought mercy. I looked to the middle cross, and saw my dear Saviour bleeding and dying for sinners; and all at once I believed from my heart he would

save me. That moment I felt an unspeakable joy spring up in my soul. Oh, the depth of God's love to sinners!"

"What do you think of reason now, Joseph?"

"Think of reason? why, it is blind as a bat in spiritual things."

Very many times, during the following six weeks, did I sit beside Joseph's narrow straw bed; but in no case have I witnessed so much of unmixed joy. His former readings of the Bible were now of unspeakable value. Long-forgotten passages of the promises came back with renewed force, and he seemed to bask in the sunshine of heaven. From being his teacher, I became a learner. On one occasion he said, "I have been thinking of the difference betwixt the death of Paul and Byron. Paul said, 'The time of my departure is at hand; but there is laid up for me a crown.' Byron said—

'My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flower, the fruit of life is gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.'

What a difference betwixt the last days of a scoffer and a Christian!"

On the last day of Joseph's life I read to him his mother's psalm. The last sigh came, and with it two faint words, "Jesus—Mother."

"The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."

On the day of Joseph's funeral, three kind neighbours assisted me in carrying his body to THE SILENT CORNER.

JOHN ASHWORTH.
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FAITH VERY SIMPLE.

By REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



To many, faith seems a hard thing. The truth is, *it is only hard because it is easy*. Naaman thought it hard that he should have to wash in Jordan; but if it had been some great thing, he would have done it right cheerfully. People think that salvation must be the result of some act or feeling, very mysterious, and very difficult; but God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. In order that the feeblest and the most ignorant may be saved, he has made the way of salvation as easy as the A B C.

The fact is, we do not believe that God means what he is saying; we act as if it could not be true.

I have heard of a Sunday school teacher who had been trying to illustrate what faith was, and, as he could not get it into the minds of his boys, he took his watch, and he said, "Now, I will give you this watch, John. Will you have it?" John fell thinking what the teacher could mean, and did not seize the treasure, but made no answer. The teacher said to the next boy, "Henry, here is the watch. Will you have it?" The boy, with a very proper modesty, replied, "No, thank you, sir." The teacher tried several of the boys with the same result; till at last a youngster, who was not so wise or so thoughtful as the others, but rather more believing, said in the most natural way, "Thank you, sir," and put the watch into his pocket. Then the other boys woke up to a startling fact: their companion had received a watch which they had refused. One of the boys quickly asked of the teacher, "Is he to keep it?" "Of course he is," said the teacher; "I offered it to him, and he accepted it. I put the watch before you, and said that I gave it to you, but none of you would have it." "Oh!" said the boy, "if I had known you meant it, I would have had it." Of course he would. He thought it was a piece of acting, and nothing more.

Now I wish that I could always be such a simple child as literally to believe what the Lord says, and take what he puts before me, resting quite content that he is not playing with me, and that I cannot be wrong in accepting what he sets before me in the gospel. When the Lord uplifts his dear Son before a sinner, that sinner should take him without hesitation. If you take him, you have him; and none can take him from you. Out with your hand, man, and take him at once!

Two inquiring ones came to me in my vestry. They had been hear-

ing the gospel from me for only a short season, but they had been deeply impressed by it. I asked them, "Have you in very deed believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you saved?" One of them replied, "I have been trying hard to believe." "No," I said, "that will not do. Did you ever tell your father that you tried to believe him?" After I had dwelt a while upon the matter, they admitted that such language would have been an insult to their father. I then set the gospel very plainly before them in as simple language as I could, and I begged them to believe Jesus, who is more worthy of faith than the best of fathers. One of them replied, "I cannot realize it: I cannot realize that I am saved." Then I went on to say, "God bears testimony to his Son, that whosoever trusts in his Son is saved. Will you make him a liar now, or will you believe his word?" While I thus spoke, one of them started as if astonished, and she startled us all as she cried, "O sir, I see it all! I am saved! Oh, do bless Jesus for me! he has shown me the way, and he has saved me! I see it all." One of the two sisters, however, could not see the gospel as the other had done, though I feel sure she will do so before long.

Now, did it not seem strange that, both hearing the same words, one should come out into clear light, and the other should remain in the gloom? The change which comes over the heart when the understanding grasps the gospel is often reflected in the face, and shines there like the light of heaven. Such newly enlightened souls often exclaim, "Why, sir, it is so plain; how is it I have not seen it before this? I understand all I have read in the Bible now, though I could not make it out before." The fact is, the truth was always plain, but they were looking for signs and wonders, and therefore

did not see what was nigh them. Christ Jesus is before our faces, and we have only to look to him, and live; but we make all manner of bewilderment of it, and so manufacture a maze out of that which is plain as a pikestaff.

The little incident about the two sisters reminds me of another. A much-esteemed friend came to me one Sabbath morning after service, to shake hands with me, "for," said she, "I was fifty years old on the same day as yourself. I am like you in that one thing, sir; but I am the very reverse of you in better things." I remarked, "Then you must be a very good woman; for in many things I wish I also could be the reverse of what I am." "No, no," she said, "I did not mean anything of that sort; I am not right at all." "What!" I cried; "are you not a believer in the Lord Jesus?" "Well," she said, with much emotion, "I—I will try to be." I laid hold of her hand, and said, "My dear soul, you are not going to tell me that you will try to believe my Lord Jesus! I cannot have such talk from you. It means blank unbelief. What has He done that you should talk of him in that way? Would you tell *me* that you would try to believe *me*? I know you would not treat me so rudely. You think me a true man, and so you believe me at once; and surely you cannot do less with my Lord Jesus." Then with tears she exclaimed, "O sir, do pray for me!" To this I replied, "I do not feel that I can do anything of the kind. What can I ask the Lord Jesus to do for one who will not trust him? I see nothing to pray about. If you will believe him, you shall be saved; and if you will not believe him, I cannot ask him to invent a new way to gratify your unbelief." Then she said again, "I will try to believe;" but I told her solemnly I would have none of her

trying; for the message from the Lord did not mention "trying," but said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I pressed upon her the great truth, that "He that believeth on him hath everlasting life;" and its terrible reverse—"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." I urged her to full faith in the once crucified but now ascended Lord, and the Holy Spirit there and then enabled her to trust. She most tenderly said, "O sir, I have been looking to my feelings, and this has been my mistake! Now I trust my soul with Jesus, and I am saved." She found immediate peace through believing. There is no other way.

God has been pleased to make the necessities of life very simple matters. We must eat; and even a blind man can find the way to his mouth. We must drink; and even the tiniest babe knows how to do this without instruction. Now faith is, in spiritual things, what eating and drinking are in temporal things. By the mouth of faith we take the blessings of grace into our spiritual nature, and they are ours. Oh, you who would believe, but think you cannot, do you not see that, as one can drink without strength, and as one can eat without strength, and gets strength by eating, so we may receive Jesus without effort, and by accepting him we receive power for all such further effort as we may be called to put forth?

Faith is so simple a matter, that, whenever I try to explain it, I am very fearful lest I should becloud its simplicity. I will, however, make one trial, and pray the Lord to make it clear.

I am told that on a certain Highland road there was a disputed right of way. The owner wished to preserve his supremacy, and at the

same time he did not wish to inconvenience the public: hence an arrangement which occasioned the following incident. Seeing a sweet country girl standing at the gate, a tourist went up to her, and offered her a shilling to permit him to pass. "No, no," said the child, "I must not take anything from you; but you are to say, '*Please allow me to pass,*' and then you may come through and welcome." The permission was to be asked for; but it could be had for the asking. Just so, eternal life is free; and it can be had, yea, it shall be at once had, by trusting in the word of Him who cannot lie. Trust Christ, and by that trust you grasp salvation and eternal life. Do not philosophize. Do not sit down and bother your poor brain. Just believe Jesus as you would believe your father. Trust him as you trust your money with a banker, or your health with a doctor.

Faith will not long seem a difficulty to you; nor ought it to be so, for it is simple.

Faith is trusting, trusting wholly upon the person, work, merit, and power of the Son of God. Some think this trusting is a romantic business, but indeed it is the simplest thing that can possibly be. To some of us, truths which were once hard to believe are now matters of fact which we should find it hard to doubt. If one of our great-grandfathers were to rise from the dead, and come into the present state of things, what a deal of trusting he would have to do! He would say to-morrow morning, "Where are the

flint and steel? I want a light;" and we should give him a little box with tiny pieces of wood in it, and tell him to strike one of them on the box. He would have to trust a good deal before he would believe that fire would thus be produced. We should next say to him, "Now that you have a light, turn that tap, and light the gas." He sees nothing. How can light come through an invisible vapour? And yet it does. "Come with us, grandfather. Sit in that chair. Look at that box in front of you. You shall have your likeness directly." "No, child," he would say, "it is ridiculous. The sun take my portrait? I cannot believe it." "Yes, and you shall ride fifty miles in an hour without horses." He will not believe it till we get him into the train. "My dear sir, you shall speak to your son in New York, and he shall answer you in a few minutes." Would he not want all his faith? Yet these things are believed by us without effort, because experience has made us familiar with them. Faith is greatly needed by you who are strangers to spiritual things; you seem lost while we are talking about them. But oh, how simple it is to us who have the new life, and have communion with spiritual realities! We have a Father to whom we speak, and he hears us, and a blessed Saviour who hears our heart's longings, and helps us in our struggles against sin. It is all plain to him that understandeth. May it now be plain to you!

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JUNE 1891.

BREAD CAST ON THE WATERS.



I. ABOUT thirty years ago, in a seaport town of England, lived Silas Blake, a master-joiner by trade; a man of good character, inclined to religion, but not pious, and somewhat violent when his temper was roused, which happened not unfrequently.

He was well on in life, and had a son, an only child, fourteen years

old, whom he fondly expected to be his helper and successor in business, and the stay of his declining years; but the lad's thoughts were not turned that way. He wished to be a sailor, and could think of no happier prospect than to be captain of a ship.

As usual in such cases, the lad could not be dissuaded from his

purpose, and much discord was introduced into the family in consequence. At length, however, the father's mind took a sudden change, and he said to his boy, "Now, my man, if you *will* go to sea, *go you must*. I'll do all I can to help you into that way of life, but once there you'll have to stick there, and not a finger will I ever move to help you out of it."

It was harshly spoken, and the lad, wounded as by a shaft of iron in his soul, would have turned from his purpose at that moment, had not pride kept him obdurate, and a feeling as of hatred for his father, whom he conceived to be his enemy, sprang up in his breast.

His mother was a godly woman, and soon after, when he was leaving home to join his ship, she took him aside, put her arms round his neck, and, drawing his head close to her bosom, said, "My dear boy, go where you may, absent from me, you will never be absent from my prayers!" He said nothing, but at the bottom of his heart there was a secret "amen" uttered in response to this.

II. As time went on, the young sailor met with hardships, not few nor small, nor were they what he had expected, and many a bitter thought of blame had he against his father for allowing him to go to sea.

But, alas! the worst evils he encountered were not felt by him to be hardships at all. Most of his associates on board ship were rude-mannered, rough-spoken men, and too readily he entered into their ways, without being conscious of the gradual change for the worse that was passing over him. Thus he began not only to use, but to glory in profane and impure language. He forgot there was any Sabbath, and felt no loss. His Bible dropped out of memory too, and was not regretted. Even his mother's prayers, and his

own fervent "amen" added to them, were lost to him as completely almost as though they had never existed.

However, he was of good natural parts, and made swift and steady progress in learning a seaman's duties. Stage by stage, from lower grade to higher, he rose, until, in course of years, he had reached the summit of his boyhood's ambition. He was now master of a noble ship.

But while he grew up to be a strong man and prosperous, his spiritual nature declined more and more. He cared not to visit his home. He ceased almost to think of it. Of the passengers on board his ship he avoided those whom he thought religious, and found pleasure in the company of atheists and others who had no good word to say of Christ.

It disappointed him to find that the lady whom he had married during one of his brief visits on shore was a Christian woman, and he even threatened that, if she did not drop the religion out of her letters and out of her life, he would have no more to do with her.

The iron which had entered his soul many years before, when his father spoke a harsh word to him, was still rankling there.

III. One day, during a voyage to China, when the sky had grown clear and the sea smooth after a period of rough weather, Captain Blake, as he paced the deck, was accosted by one of his lady passengers. She was young and slender, and spoke to him with evident timidity, as if venturing on an enterprise too great for the little strength and courage she possessed.

Her request was that she might be allowed to have a talk with the crew, or as many of them as could be brought together at some convenient time. "And what do you want to talk to them about?" said

the captain. "About Christ," she replied, and felt so alarmed at her own boldness, that it was all she could do to utter these three syllables.

The captain was not pleased; the request rather disgusted him; but, being not unkindly nor unchivalrous, he softened a little the gruff manner natural to him, and said, "Well, my good lady, I don't mind letting you have it as you wish; not that I care for this sort of thing myself, for I am no believer in Christ, and am not inclined that way; but if you want to have a talk with the men, I'll call them together,—I don't know that it can do much harm."

She talked to the men; and meanwhile the captain kept walking up and down, catching a word now and then as it fell from her lips. She was not now timid, nor bold, but—what was a great surprise to herself—spoke as freely as though she were a sister talking to her brothers. It was the Spirit gave her utterance; and so full was she of Christ, it hardly needed any external word to come to her with its message of encouragement, "Fear not, for I am with thee!"

She did not attempt to preach; she only talked in a familiar way concerning Jesus, and his love and brotherly kindness; his sacrifice to take away sin; the freeness of the gospel invitation; the power of the Cross to heal the sin-stricken soul; the power of faith to unite the soul to Christ, that it may be safe as he is safe, and pure as he is pure.

It was an old story, doubtless, even to the rough sailors; but it was a woman's voice that told it, in soft tones, "gentle and low," with that persuasive charm thrown into it which the feminine heart alone can yield, and yields to perfection when it is filled with the love of Jesus.

When she had finished, the captain approached her, somewhat shyly, and said that she might have another

meeting if she liked. She accepted the offer gladly, and was astonished to find, on the next occasion, that a harmonium had been brought up from below and placed on deck for her use; and not less astonished to see the captain take his place amongst the men, and listen, as eagerly as they did, whilst she told simply, as the Gospels themselves do, the story of the Shepherd's love for the lost sheep, and the Father's love for his lost son.

Thus was a regular gospel service instituted on board that ship, and it remains now to be told what were the remarkable fruits of it.

IV. The young girl, for she was only such, who conducted these services, was a miracle to herself in the position she now held, and the duty she was now discharging. She was from a northern city in England, where her parents lived, and was now on her way to China to keep house for her brother, a man of business there. Often she had cherished the desire of speaking for Christ, perhaps in foreign mission work, but frail health, and frailty in her courage, too, with some domestic ties, had come in the way, and she was on the point of dismissing it finally as a perfectly vain desire, when lo! the hand of Providence moved, and her heart's wish was unboundedly gratified sooner than she could well realize that it was so.

When the voyage was nearly ended, the captain took opportunity of speaking to her privately. "I shall ever thank God," he said, "that you came on board my ship. At first I was ashamed to be seen listening to you; but, as I passed to and fro, I overheard you pronouncing the Blessed Name in the same way as my mother used to do. Her tones, her prayers, her tears, her entreaties, and those of my poor wife too, whom I have been crushing with

unkindness,—all came before me, as in a flash ; and the moment after, I know not how, my heart was changed. Something new had entered it. The grudge against my old father was not there any more ; it seemed as if I saw him, and ran and knelt at his feet, and cried, ‘ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee ! ’

“ Nor,” he continued, “ has the blessing come on me only. For there is not one of my men you have been speaking to, who has not these days, earlier or later, entered into the purity and joy of a changed life, like my own.”

The lady was well-nigh awestruck by this disclosure, and in reply could only say, “ Well, my friend, bread is cast on the waters here and there, and God has his own strange ways of blessing it ! ” And with this she fled to her cabin to conceal the deep emotion that overwhelmed her.

V. The voyage being ended, the captain, before parting, was most urgent that he might do some service to his benefactor. Would she allow him to write to her parents to tell them what an angel of mercy she had been ? Oh yes ; but he was to leave out the angel. Might he visit her parents, and speak to them what no pen could tell ? Yes ; they would be glad to see him. But had she no little present for them which he might take back to England, under his care, and convey to them with his own hand ? Yes, he would have that satisfaction too ; so she gathered a few oddities together, and sent them home by him.

In due course the vessel reached London, where he wrote letters full of glad tidings to his father and mother, who were still living, and to his wife, with the hope of a joyous meeting when a few short days had passed. He despatched the parcel to the lady’s parents, and wrote to them also, stating how thankful himself and his crew were for the converting grace which God had sent through means of their daughter, and promising further details when he had the pleasure of visiting them, on the arrival of his ship, a few days later, at Liverpool.

The ship left London for the Mersey, but had not long started on this hopeful voyage, when, during the night, coming into collision with another vessel, it sank, and, in the darkness, every soul on board was lost. So the newspapers recorded it.

But there was another record on high, and also in tender hearts both in China and in England, where the fact was stated differently—not dead, but alive again ; not lost, but found : “ we rejoice with trembling.”

“ God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm ! ”

Reader, the hour approaches when *your* life too will be lost for this world. Are you prepared, so that it may not be lost for eternity ? Doubt not the mercy of God in Christ. “ Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JULY 1891.

ARE YOU CONVERTED?



READER, the question is one which ought to come home to all ranks and classes, high or low, rich or poor, old or young, gentle or simple. Any one may get to heaven without money, rank, or learning. No one, however wise, wealthy, noble, or beautiful, will ever get to heaven without conversion.

I will try to show you that conversion is—

I. *A scriptural thing.*

709

I mean by this, that conversion is a thing plainly mentioned in the Bible. It matters nothing who says a thing, and declares it to be religious truth. It matters nothing whether we like or dislike a doctrine. Is it in the Bible? *That* is the only question. If it is, we have no right to refuse it.

Reader, let us turn to the Bible. Hear what David says,—“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the

soul." "Sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Psalm xix. 7 ; li. 13.) Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says,—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 3.) Hear what St. Peter says,—“Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (Acts iii. 19.) To be renewed,—to be transformed,—to be created anew,—to be raised from the dead,—to be illuminated,—to pass from death to life,—to be born again,—to put off the old man and put on the new man,—all these are scriptural expressions, which mean the same thing as conversion. They are all the same thing, seen from a different point of view. Conversion is a scriptural thing. Now, **ARE YOU CONVERTED?**

II. *Conversion is a real thing.*

I feel it very needful to say something about this point. We live in an age of shams, cheats, deceptions, and impositions. I can hardly wonder that many regard all Christian professors as suspicious characters, if not hypocrites, and deny the reality of any such thing as conversion.

Still, there is such a thing as conversion. There are to be seen among men, every here and there, unmistakable cases of a complete turning round of heart, character, tastes, and life,—cases that deserve no other name than that of conversion. To deny it is mere obstinacy and affectation.

Of such changes the Bible gives many unmistakable patterns. Let any one read attentively the history of Manasseh, king of Judah,—of Matthew the apostle,—of the woman of Samaria,—of Zaccheus the publican,—of Mary Magdalene,—of Saul of Tarsus,—of the Philippian jailor,—of Lydia the purple-seller,—of the Jews to whom Peter preached on the day of Pentecost,—of the Corinthians to whom St. Paul preached. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1-19 ; Matt. ix. 9 ; John iv. 1-29 ; Luke xix. 1-10 ; viii. 2 ; Acts

ix. 1-22 ; xvi. 14, 15 ; 25-34 ; ii. 37-41 ; 1 Cor. vi. 9-11). In every one of these cases there was a mighty change. What can that change be called but conversion ?

Of such changes every man's own neighbourhood and circle of acquaintances will furnish many specimens. About their own souls, and the importance of being saved,—about sin, and God, and Christ, and repentance, and faith, and holiness,—about Bible-reading, and praying, and Sabbath-keeping,—about all these things they are completely changed. Once more I ask, what can such changes be called but conversions ?

But, alas ! there are too many people who will allow nothing, and will dispute everything, in religion. They know that they are not yet converted themselves, and they therefore try hard to make out that nobody was ever converted at all ! Now, **ARE YOU CONVERTED?**

III. *Conversion is a necessary thing.*

Some worthy people are ready enough to admit that conversion is a scriptural truth and a reality, but not a thing that needs to be pressed on most people. The heathen, they grant, need conversion. Even the thieves, and fallen characters, and inmates of jails, they allow, may require conversion. But to talk of conversion being necessary for church-going people, is to talk of things which they cannot see at all. “Such people may, in some cases, need a little stirring-up and amendment. They may not be quite as good as they ought to be. It would be better if they attended more to religion. But you have no right to say they need conversion ! It is uncharitable, harsh, narrow-minded, bitter, wrong, to tell them they require conversion !”

Reader, this sadly common notion is a complete delusion. It is a pure invention of man's, without a scrap of foundation in God's Word. The

Bible teaches expressly that the change of heart, called conversion, is a thing absolutely needed by every one. It is needed because of the total corruption of human nature. It is needed because of the condition of every man's natural heart.

Without conversion of heart we cannot serve God. We have naturally neither faith, nor fear, nor love toward God and his Son Jesus Christ. Without conversion we have no more heart in our religion than a brick or a stone. Can a dead corpse serve God? We know it cannot. Well, without conversion we are dead toward God.

Reader, let no man deceive you. An interest in Christ and conversion are *absolutely* necessary. There is no salvation without conversion. ARE YOU CONVERTED?

IV. *Conversion is a happy thing.*

I shall have written in vain if I leave this point untouched. There are thousands, I firmly believe, who are ready to admit the truth of all I have said hitherto. Scriptural, real, necessary, all this they willingly allow conversion to be.—“Of course,” they say, “we know it is all true. People ought to be converted. But will it increase a man's happiness to be converted?” Here, alas! is a point at which many stick fast. They have a secret lurking fear that if they are converted they must become melancholy, miserable, and low-spirited. Conversion and a sour face,—conversion and a gloomy brow,—conversion and an ill-natured readiness to snub young people and put down all mirth,—conversion and a sorrowful countenance,—conversion and sighing and groaning,—all these are things which they seem to think must go together! No wonder that such people shrink from the idea of conversion.

Reader, the notion I have just described is very common and very mischievous. I desire to protest against it with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. I assert with-

out hesitation that the conversion described in Scripture is a happy thing and not a miserable one, and that if converted persons are not happy, the fault must be in themselves. The happiness of a true Christian, no doubt, is not quite of the same sort as that of a worldly man. It is not made up of excitement, and levity, and boisterous mirth. But in the main I am confident the converted man is the happiest man.

Reader, the plain truth is, that people speak ill of conversion because they know nothing really about it. They run down converted men and women as unhappy, because they judge them by their outward appearance of calmness, gravity, and quietness, and know nothing of their inward peace.

Reader, settle it in your mind today that the friend who labours for your conversion to God is the best friend that you have. He is a friend not merely for the life to come, but for the life that now is. It is because I desire your happiness as well as your salvation that I say,—ARE YOU CONVERTED?

V. In the last place, *Conversion is a thing that may be seen.*

This is a part of my subject that ought never to be overlooked. Hundreds have caused the very name of conversion to stink, by the lives they have lived after declaring themselves converted. They have imagined themselves converted, because their feelings were excited. They have called themselves converts without the slightest right or title to that honoured name. All this has done immense harm. It is doing peculiar harm in the present day. The times demand a very clear assertion of the great principle, that true conversion is a thing that can always be seen.

I admit fully that the manner of the Spirit's working is invisible. It is like the wind. There is something about it far beyond the reach of man's

eyes or understanding.—But while I admit this decidedly, I maintain, no less decidedly, that where no effect can be seen, there you may be sure there is no grace. Where no visible fruit can be found, there you may be sure is no conversion.

Reader, do you ask me what we may expect in a true conversion? I reply, there will always be something seen in a converted man's character, and feelings, and conduct, and opinions, and daily life. You will not see in him perfection. But you will see in him something peculiar, distinct, and different from other people. You will see him hating sin, loving Christ, following after holiness, taking pleasure in his Bible, persevering in prayer. You will see him penitent, humble, believing, temperate, charitable, truthful, good-tempered, patient, upright, honourable, kind. In some converted persons you will see these things more distinctly, in others less. This only I say, wherever there is conversion, something of this kind will be seen.

Reader, let this last point sink down into your heart and never be forgotten. Conversion is *a thing that will always be seen.*

And now let me wind up this tract by a few plain appeals to the consciences of all who read it:—

1. Are you converted? I am not asking about other people. The heathen no doubt need conversion. The unhappy inmates of jails and reformatories need conversion. There may be people living near your own house who are open sinners and unbelievers, and need conversion. But

all this is beside the question. I ask, Are you converted yourself?

2. Are you converted? It is no reply to tell me that many people are hypocrites and false professors. It is no argument to say that there are many sham revivals, and mock conversions. All this may be very true. But the abuse of a thing does not destroy the use of it. The circulation of bad money is no reason why there should not be good coin. Whatever others may be, Are you converted yourself?

3. Are you converted? It is no answer to tell me that you go to church or chapel, and have been baptised and admitted to the table of the Lord. All this proves little. I could say as much for Judas Iscariot, Demas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira. The question is still not answered. Is your heart changed? Are you really converted to God?

4. Are you converted? If not, never rest till you are. Make haste. Awake to know your danger. Escape for your life. Flee from the wrath to come. Time is short. Eternity is near. Life is uncertain. Judgment is sure. Arise and call upon God. The throne of grace is yet standing. The Lord Jesus Christ is yet waiting to be gracious. The promises of the gospel are wide, broad, full, and free. Lay hold upon them this day. Repent, and believe the gospel. Repent, and be converted. Rest not, rest not, rest not, till you know and feel that you are a converted man.

BISHOP RYLE

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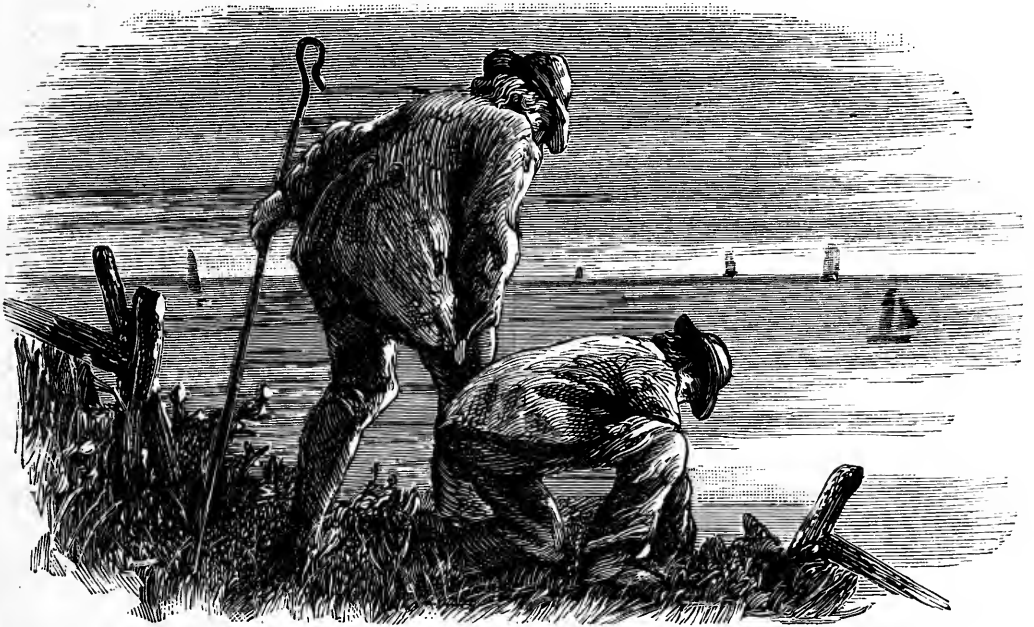
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"SUCH A GOOD LAD."



—See page 3.

THE subject of the following sketch was a lad of seventeen or eighteen years of age, who had been sent, as a little one, to the infant class in the Sunday school, and had been handed on from class to class till he had been confirmed, and had partaken of the Holy Communion. Shortly after that, the fatal symptoms of consumption showed themselves, and they had reached a stage at which they could not be arrested ere his parents had taken any alarm about him. Some of his old friends being away from home, I was asked to visit him. I went, and the door was opened by his mother, who told me her son was out having a drive in a bath-chair while the sun was shining ; but she asked me if I would

come in and have a talk about her boy. It was an anxious mother's heart that poured itself out.

"He has always been such a good lad," she repeated lovingly over and over, "and yet if I were *sure* he was really prepared for death, I could let him go."

"Do you think that he is not trusting in Jesus?"

"Well, he's such a quiet lad that I can't get to know what he's thinking about these things, but I never see him read his Bible nor such. You see he's always been such a good lad;" (this with a sigh.)

"You mean that he has rather been thankful he was not as bad as others, than ever cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'?"

"Yes, that's just about it."

"Shall we pray for him together?"

"Yes, I wish you would."

We knelt at that hard glazed sofa, and reminded Jesus that he had said, when on earth, "If two of you shall agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven;" and that we were relying on that word, as we agreed to ask for the salvation of this precious boy. Next day, I found him propped up with pillows in an arm-chair, expecting me. A weary boy he looked. I found the difficulty the mother had expressed met me at the very outset. He seemed surrounded by a halo of reserve, which one hesitated to dissipate, unless the need were urgent. We spoke of the Sunday school, of services, teachers, the steady course of scriptural training he had received; all of which, in a sort of way, he had appreciated. But I got no further. It was during a course of many visits that I managed to edge in the following questions, and got the discouraging replies:—

"Have you ever felt yourself a sinner?"

"I've always said it in church."

"But don't you think we often say things without really feeling them? Have you ever had it deeply in your mind, 'I have sinned'?"

"I suppose everybody has sinned sometimes; but, you see, I've been baptised, and confirmed, and gone to Holy Communion, and I've always been quiet and good. I've never taken up with any but lads like myself, that went to Sunday school and such like. I've never used bad language or anything."

"Do you read the Bible sometimes?"

"No; you see I know it all, and besides it seems to tire me."

Sometimes I tried talking simply about his companions, or his work, trying to get at anything that would really interest him. Sometimes I tried saying things to startle a little, but all was received without much change of expression in those lacklustre eyes. When he realises that he is not to recover, I thought sometimes, perhaps it may rouse him. His mother urged it, and at last, in fear and trembling for the physical consequences, I told him one day what the doctor had said. It was received with the same lassitude as everything else. "It'll be all right," he said, as if he were speaking of somebody else. Nothing seemed to come close to his personal separate life. His conscience was burdened with no trespass, yet he lacked all the love that prompts to follow Jesus. I had been there almost every day for so long, making excuses for going constantly to take him grapes, flowers, or jelly, that I might have fresh opportunities; and, in all that time, the only crumb of comfort I got was that the mother said, "He looks for your visits, and seems disappointed any day you don't come." Yet it might have been a more hopeful sign, as regarded vitality, if he had rather disliked them. I was coming to the conclu-

sion that his invincible indifference must be a symptom of disease, that he was too far gone to feel anything vividly, or else that *I* was not God's chosen channel for reaching him. I had always gone full of faith and prayer, and come away with a sense of defeat. As I made my way home now, I was half resolving to give up the attempt, and leave it to those who had known him longer. But that evening, as I reflected over that weeping mother and her son, the practical question came, "How could I bring Jesus to the spot where he was so sorely needed?" It was turned into a prayer, "Lord! he is dead. He can't come to thee. Come thou to him. Speak thou the word, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.' Then take him by the hand, and deliver him unto his mother."

Next day, with renewed courage, I went to pay my daily visit.

Lately he had thought the sofa a nice change from the arm-chair, and lying down more comfortable than sitting up. This day he lay there so tired.

"Jesus has words about rest for the weary," I said; "but I want to tell you a little story."

"Is it a long one?" he asked wearily.

"No, quite short, and then I won't stay longer. It is about a friend of mine who had a fancy, when he was a young man, to be a farmer; so his father sent him to try the life, by staying with a sheep-farmer in Sutherlandshire. This farmer had a large sheep-run, but it was rather a dangerous one, for it was a great heather moor along cliffs overhanging the sea. The cliffs went down sheer two hundred feet to the water, and the sea rolled in, boiling, lashing, and thundering against the rocks, the spray dashing off in white foam. It was a dangerous moor, you see, for sheep if they were left out after nightfall; for if they took a

false step over the cliffs, they would be dashed to pieces. Every evening the farmer went and collected the sheep before dark, taking his young friend with him. Once, in the gloaming, they had found the scattered sheep, and got them into the fold, when—on counting—there was one missing. 'We must seek her before night falls,' said the shepherd, and off they went. They hunted high and low, ranged the whole moor, but no lost sheep could they find. At last the farmer said, 'We must go along the edge of the cliff, and see if she can have fallen over.' They went, peering over the edge into the seething, boiling water below. Suddenly the farmer exclaimed—'There she is, sir! but how did she get there?' On a ledge of rock, about twenty feet below, the sheep was grazing quietly on a beautiful bit of green grass.

"How will you ever get her up? Will you have a rope round you and go down?"

"Oh no," replied the farmer; "if I went now, she is so pleased with that bit of green grass, she would make one bound away whenever she saw me, and be over the cliff."

"What will you do, then?"

"Oh, we've had to do this kind of thing before. I'll keep watching her. When she has finished eating that bit of grass she will get hungry, then faint for want, then so weary, that if I go down then, instead of bounding away from me, she will be glad to come to my arms, and I can carry her safe into the fold."

The boy was looking at me more earnestly than usual. I think he read the meaning of the parable from nature before I applied it.

"Don't you think, if the Good Shepherd had come to you in your strong, happy days, when you were content with the things of this world, and held out his arms to you, you would have turned away

from him? But he has been waiting—watching. This world can no longer give you anything more. You are faint and weary. Now, the Good Shepherd knows his time has come. He is close beside you, and he says so tenderly, ‘Come unto me, weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’ May I ask him to let you hear his voice, and come at his call?”

“Oh, I am so tired.”

“Yes, Lord, so tired—so weary—let him feel thy compassion yearning over him, and accept thy rest for the weary. Fold him safe in the arms of Jesus!”

I thought I caught a faint “Amen,” as I rose and left him.

“What must I say to-day?” was my thought, as I knocked at the door next time. But the Lord had spoken; there was no need of me now. The boy’s lips were opened too. I was hardly in his room before he began: “Oh, I’m so glad you’ve come. I’ve heard the Good Shepherd! It was this morning. Mother had dressed me and put me in the arm-chair, and suddenly I got so faint she went to fetch me something, and when she was away, I thought I should have died of weariness, when all at once I seemed to hear Jesus say, ‘Come unto me, ye weary, and I will give you rest.’ I thought of the poor sheep, hardly able to creep from weakness into the shepherd’s arms, and I said, ‘That’s me, Lord; but, O Lord! I give myself to thee,’ and rest came at once—rest and peace; and I thought he was saying,

‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.’”

“Shall we thank him?”

“Oh yes, that’s just what I wanted you for, and to read the parable of the lost sheep.”

“It is too good almost to be true,” said the mother, weeping now from joy.

I almost echoed her words as I went home, for a sentence impressed on me as a child kept running in my mind, and causing uneasiness and dubiety:—“There is no getting through the strait gate and into the narrow way, except by the deepest sorrow for sin.” “Why, I don’t believe that boy has ever thought about sin at all, and yet he has found rest in Christ. But sin must be my subject next time.”

Again the Lord, who had undertaken the case, was before me. Ere I could begin, “Isn’t it strange,” said the boy, “when you have come to Christ, how you begin to see sin everywhere? I’ve been going all over my life, and it seems all wrong, and I thought I had been such a good lad; but ‘the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.’ Oh, I’ve heard that so often, and I never saw the meaning of it till now.”

The closing scene came a few weeks later. He was sitting up in bed, his breathing short, and only his mother beside him. Suddenly he folded his hands, as if in prayer, looked up, and said, “Jesus!” and that was all.

(Abridged, by permission, from “Modern Miracles,” by LEILA THOMSON.)

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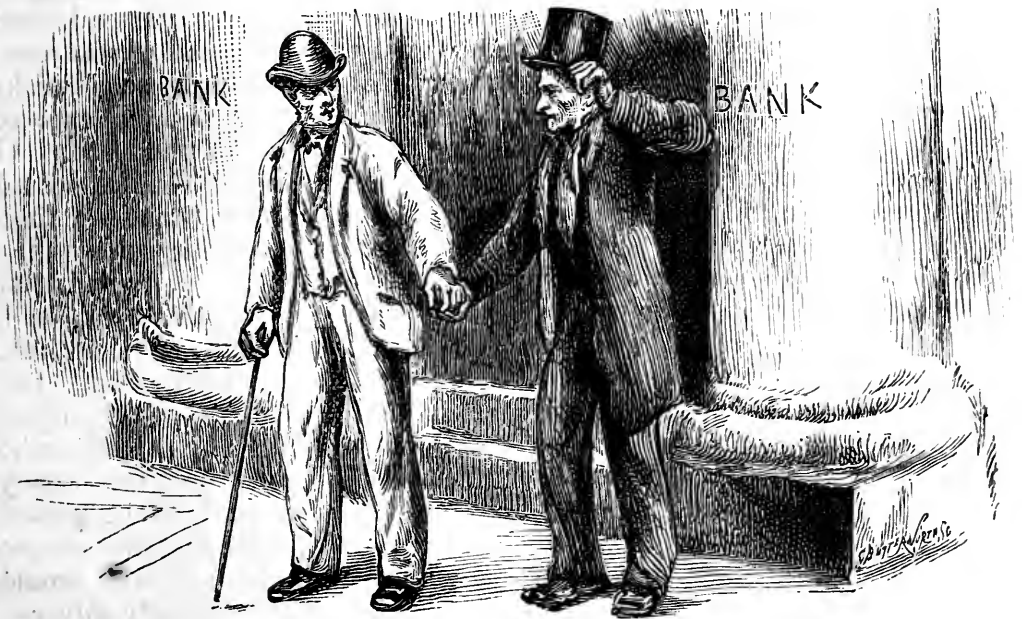
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1891.

DENNIS TRENER.



DENNIS TRENER was a tall old man, of a somewhat distinguished presence and courteous manners. He always had a respectful and dignified salutation for anybody he knew, and among these were some of the most respectable people in the busy Cornish town of —. Dennis was himself a Cornishman, as you would have soon discovered by occasional

provincialisms. As he touched his battered silk hat, and passed the time of day, a willing response was accorded by people of every station in life. In the course of a day a good number of ladies and gentlemen would stop for a word, and such stoppages were generally for poor old Dennis's profit.

He talked so well, and in a

manner that produced the impression of a truly pious resignation, at the same time that it made his lot seem all the harder. "Thank 'e, sir, I get on breave and well since I did see 'e last, only I cean't get 'long well o' nights, what with the cough and the rheumatics in my leg; but I can get about meddlin' in the day, thank God." The tone was not at all unmanly, and yet there was such a touch of the pathetic that you would have felt ashamed and grieved to leave him without bestowing a gift.

Like other people, I usually waited for a short chat with him, when he was almost sure to refer to something I had said in the last sermon or address he had heard. Such a reference was always accompanied by a word of self-reproach, and the expression of a bitter regret that he could not rest with assurance in the precious word of God's grace.

And why could he not? How that question perplexed me! The promises of the gospel are so full and so sure, that there was a real mystery about poor Dennis's want of comfort in the sense of salvation. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," is the word of Him who is "the Truth;" and yet here was a man apparently most sincere, who, with tears streaming down his face, told of frequent agonising prayers for the assured pardon that never came. "But," I would ask, "are you sure you can trust in the willingness and power of Christ to take your sins away?"

I don't doubt it, sir, no more'n I doubt that I'm alive." "Well, then, Dennis," I would reply, "'he that believeth shall be saved,' 'he that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life.' If you have this trust on Christ's grace and power, you ought to be at rest, and I do not understand your continued darkness and distress." "Oh, sir," he would say, "I would give all the world, if I

had it, to know the peace of God."

Everything about the man seemed to confirm his sincerity, except this distress of mind from which he never escaped. No one was more regular in attendance at public worship, no one apparently more devout. His seat in the back pew of the church was always occupied, in prayer and praise his whole soul seemed to be engaged, and every word of God and of the preacher he drank in as with a thirsty soul. Often I have seen him draw out his coloured pocket handkerchief to wipe away his tears, as he was moved by the story of Jesus and his love. The same regularity and fervour characterised his attendance at the week-night prayer-meetings and preaching services. When he seemed really too unwell to attend, and when his persistent cough was more than usually distressing, at all risks and inconvenience he was sure to come to the house of the Lord. "I cean't bide at home, sir," he would say, "when there's a chance of finding peace to my longing soul."

Poor old Dennis! When I first knew him he was past work, and, having no relation to care for him, was in receipt of parish relief. But he was not dependent on this alone, for there were many kind people who felt it a privilege to help the stately and well-bred man. As he passed the bank door, some one was sure to be entering or leaving who would quietly slip a coin—usually silver—into his thin hand. A few of my congregation regarded him as a weekly pensioner, and every Sunday morning he was at the church gates in time to receive their alms as they entered for worship. In these ways he was secured against want, and his friends were satisfied of his genuine gratitude.

At last his chronic cough beat him, and increased infirmities compelled

him to stay in his lodgings, and then to take to his bed. There he coughed and coughed, night and day, and it was evident that his days were few. There would have been nothing in this to regret, if only his title to a painless life with Jesus had been clear. But there was the trouble. He had no good hope, and therefore no peace in looking forward to the change.

For years I had battled with his doubts and fears, and, if possible, I was now more earnest and prayerful than ever in doing so. Every argument that my knowledge of Scripture, my faith in the goodwill of the Saviour, and my love and pity for the old man could suggest, seemed to be exhausted. Often, almost daily, I went to see him, and at last my visits were paid with a feeling of dread and almost of despair. I consulted my best Christian friends about him, and they could only say that he had always been something of a mystery.

One day, as I sat by the bedside of the rapidly sinking sufferer, wondering still why the Lord did not answer such eager and penitent cries for pardon and peace, and such fervent "Amens" as he uttered to my own pleadings, a thought came into my mind which I felt reluctant to express. But my duty as a Christian pastor must not be shirked. I felt that God had given me a message in which a last chance of life for the dying man might be involved. What had occurred to me was a doubt of the old man's sincerity. Was he acting the hypocrite? Had his life been a lie? Had money anything to do with his difficulties and his darkness? Was his penniless condition a sham, while his god was some secret hoard?

I shuddered at the thought of such suspicions, yet felt that there was no other explanation so reasonable of Dennis's dark despair in presence of

so much light. For he had considerable intelligent knowledge of the word of God. Nearly all the time of his illness was spent in quoting its promises, and praying for their fulfilment to his own heart. The old woman in whose house he lodged, told me this.

Well, I put the question plainly and lovingly to him. He received it meekly, and answered it with a distinct denial. I reminded him that the Judge, whom he soon would meet face to face, was present to witness his words, and that if he ventured to pass away with a lie on his lips, his condemnation was sealed, and all the soul-fears he had so often expressed would be realised. Only as he was acting in some way insincerely, could I account for his unanswered longings. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," while "whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper."

Nothing more could be done. Leaving him with a sad heart, I was still not satisfied, and felt that my suspicion was true, notwithstanding his denial. There is a saying that "dead men tell no tales," and yet the doubt about Dennis's genuineness was settled only by his death. When he died, the secret came out. Under the old man's bed his landlady found his idol. A bank-book, showing savings of upwards of £100, was concealed there. It was for this poor Dennis sold his soul. On the day of his death, I think it was, the landlady presented the bank-book at the post office, in expectation of drawing the amount standing in Dennis's name. Of course she was refused; and as the old man had no heirs, the guardians of the parish claimed the whole, to recoup themselves the many years' relief they had given him.

Thus, while his neighbours were

denying themselves to supply him with comforts, he allowed the impression to remain that he had no means of support. He had long lived falsely, so "the Truth" could not make home in his heart. He deceived his neighbours, but could not deceive his Lord. Thereby he made the joy of salvation in life, and the solace that cheers the death-bed of the Christian, impossible to himself. Hypocrisy shut the door by which he might have entered into that rest for which he was ever sighing, making it a living heritage on earth, and into the life eternal, too, at the coming of the Lord.

This story, true in all its details, the real name of the man only being withheld, contains its own lesson. Merciful and gracious as God is, he resents the approaches of the hypocrite. "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart;" but when the heart is divided between him and an idol-sin, we seek him with a lie in our right hand, and all entreaty and tears will be unavailing. We have seen how a poor man may love money, and discover that such love is "the root of all evil." The fruit it bore for him in life was as the proverbial apples of Sodom, and in death bitter as wormwood.

The moral of poor Dennis's story applies equally to any heart-idol we may cherish. Secret sin is a blight that will surely destroy the sweet buds of faith and hope and Christian joy. Secret dishonesty in business, secret indulgence in the intoxicating cup, secret acts of lust, and unacted

lustful desires, are all company too evil for Christ Jesus to share in the home of your soul. If you allow the devil to rule you in one thing you love, you may not expect the Lord to answer your desire for things you ought to love, even though you urge that desire with strong crying and tears. For him to accept you in supplication, and give you his peace, while you hide a darling sin, would be to deny himself as the God of truth and uprightness. "If I regard iniquity in mine heart, the Lord will not hear me."

When a man loves business more than the service of Christ; his ledger better than his Bible; his own questionable way in preference to that dictated by an enlightened conscience; some object of affection inconsistent with his Christian profession or with his professed wish to be a Christian, refusing to surrender it as the necessary price of peace; indulgence in some forbidden pleasure, or the pursuit of illegitimate trade,—instead of maintaining at all cost the principles of Christ, it is of no use praying for forgiveness of sin, because sin is his chief love. In such circumstances a man is deceiving himself, not the Heart-searcher, and is treacherous to his own best interests. His fighting is hopeless, for he does not mean to conquer.

Dear reader, as you finish reading this tract, join me in the prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

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146

MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1891.

60
134
128
14

"BEHOLD ME! BEHOLD ME!"



ON the borders of the Lake Sempach, in Switzerland, in the year 1386, an Austrian army was seen pouring along, fiercely determined to enslave the land. It was the season of harvest; the day was intensely hot, for the sun was overhead in a cloudless sky. A small Swiss force faced the overwhelming array of Austria, on the banks of the lake, but the spears

of the enemy received them. In vain did the Swiss renew the assault; the forest of spears seemed impenetrable. All at once, the leader of the little band, Arnold of Winkelried, exclaimed, "I will open a passage!" and on the word, he seized with both arms as many of the enemies' spears as he was able to grasp, turning their points all into his own body.

A breach was thus made in the Austrian array, and through this breach the valiant patriots rushed upon the foe with irresistible might. The sheaf of spears buried in the body of Arnold proved death to him, but over his pierced body his fellow-countrymen passed, as through a breach in the wall of a besieged city, and won the day.

Would the cry from Arnold's lips that day be misunderstood? There was no selfishness in that cry, it was self-devoting love that spoke; it was love summoning a host to reap a harvest of victory. Nor is it otherwise when our God and Saviour, the just One who suffered for the unjust, lifts his voice and cries, "*Behold Me! Behold Me!*" (Isa. lxx. 1.)

1. It is a summons addressed to the millions of our world; it is a call made upon every soul that breathes; it is a gracious invitation to all people, kindred, and tongues, to come and see a deed done, a deed of unprecedented importance, a deed of unexampled devotion, a deed of unparalleled love, and done by one who, in showing us himself, gathering into his single person the arrows of divine wrath, is meeting every craving of our soul.

Men need such a call as this; for by nature they know not what is best. Full of self, men engage in all sorts of projects about self and about one another, planning how much of earth they may win, how much of this world's wealth or pleasure. You find every man by nature with his back toward God and Christ, and utterly ignorant of the Holy Ghost. You might compare each man in his natural state to Napoleon engaged in the study of his maps, projecting conquests for himself; or to Archimedes when Syracuse was taken, engrossed with his figures and lines, even when death is at his side. We need the voice from heaven that sounds

in our ear, "*Behold Me! Behold Me!*"

One tells us that a blind girl in America, when the warm sunbeam fell pleasantly on her brow, put up her hand in search of it, trying to grasp the friendly visitor. Another tells us of a blind boy seeking, in like manner, to lay hold upon and detain the passing breeze that fanned and cooled him. But men allow their God and Saviour to bring them daily mercies of every conceivable sort, and yet ask not after the great Benefactor. They even hear of his love having led him forth to die as a sacrifice and atonement for their guilt, to shape an open passage for their escape; and still they are unmoved. No wonder, then, that from heaven, from the throne of God, from God in Christ, comes the call, "*Behold Me! Behold Me!*"

This is surely the voice of God going forth in search of souls. He knows man, and that man's fallen state manifests itself in forgetting God, and in disregarding the interest he takes in man. He knows that there is intense unbelief and indifference in man, such as only the voice that created the world by a word, and raised the dead, can overcome and remove; but which that voice *can* vanquish when the Spirit is carrying it into the heart. Were it an eclipse of the sun, men would of themselves observe it closely, and fear to miss the sight. If it were a comet sweeping through the sky, men would be found watching it patiently night after night, and calling in the aid of their fellows. If it were a procession, the triumphal entry of an earthly king into one of their cities, the heart of the city would at once throb, and all would be found hastening to look on. But it is not so when God in Christ is the object; man shrinks from the divine glory passing by till the voice reach his

heart in divine power, "*Behold Me!*" "*Behold Me!*"

What say you now to his call? Have you seen God in Christ? Have you stood still and turned aside to see this great sight? As you read these lines, the voice is calling on you. The Lord spreads before your soul his glory and his grace; and above all other things calls you to look upon his undertaking your cause when he became incarnate, in order that he might obey, suffer, and die. "*Behold Me!*" leaving the bliss of heaven to tabernacle among men. "*Behold Me!*" in the form of a servant, and the likeness of sinful flesh. "*Behold Me!*" bearing the insults of men, the fiercest malignity of hell, and the full weight of righteous wrath. "*Behold Me!*" from Bethlehem to Calvary, and from Calvary back to the Father's bosom,—every thought spent on your world, every tear wept for your world's sin, every word spoken in love to your world, every deed done with a reference to the interests of your world! Herein indeed is love. God *so* loved! Is he not entitled to call on you to turn aside from vanities, and behold his work of redeeming love?

2. *Awakened soul*, that voice speaks again. You have pronounced sentence of death on yourself; why, then, are you not thrown into the arms of Jesus? Here surely is a call to you to seek rest in none but in himself; for all you need is here. "*Behold ME! Behold ME!*" You have looked away from the world, its objects, and its pleasures, and its company; but have you as thoroughly looked away from *your own soul*? Perhaps you look at yourself far too often; at your wounds, the bites of the fiery serpents, and at your helplessness. But His counsel is, "*Behold Me! Behold Me!*" You are to be brought to rest by *what you see in the Lord*. What you see

in yourself takes peace and rest away; but what is to be seen in the Lord Jesus brings peace and rest. As one now in glory used to say, "I found it all in those two words, '*In Him!*' yes, '*In Him!*'"

He is very near you when he cries, "*Behold Me!*" He is at your side. Indeed, it is as if you were bemoaning yourself, and saying, "O that I knew where I might find him!" while he forthwith reveals himself as at hand, in the words, "*Behold Me!*" I am here! All you need is here; all in me is for your use, and I am here with it all. My holy life instead of yours, my love to God instead of yours, my pains of hell instead of yours, this is all here. "*Behold Me! Behold Me!*" I took your place, and was at the bar of God and was justified, (Isa. l. 8, 9;) you find justification in discovering that what I did and bore, as the Surety, was altogether pleasing to the Father.

He is not saying to you, "Imitate me, in order to be justified and have peace." No; he cries, "*BEHOLD Me!*" By this is meant, "*See what I have done, and how I am accepted of the Father*. Recognise my doing and suffering as making up for the wrong done to God. Behold what I have won for sinners such as you, and make my winnings your plea." So also the Father is saying, "Here am I, satisfied with Calvary! Behold Me, and be you satisfied also." It is in this sense that

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,

There is life at this moment for thee."

He does not call on you to behold *your faith*, but to see the object of your faith, the *Lord Jesus*. It is, "*Behold ME! Behold ME!*" In so doing, you soon find out what faith is. He says not, "Be sure that you see faith, but be sure that you see *Me*."

3. Are you the most obscure, illiter-

ate, neglected of all your fellows, living, it may be, in some dark garret, or some hovel? Yet let me say, if your eye is on Christ, God's eye of love is on you. If you are thinking on the worthiness of Christ, the Lord is thinking on you, and thinking on you with love and favour. While another man of greater talent and influence may be spending much time in thinking upon profound themes, problems of science, the investigations of difficulties in history or philosophy; or is tuning his harp to some song that is yet to captivate the ear of the world; you may know assuredly that while you meet the Lord's call, "*Behold Me!*" you have gained the ear of Godhead, and won the "Well done" of heaven.

There is holiness in this beholding. There is spiritual life in it. Believers renew their strength by *beholding*; for they run the race "looking unto Jesus." An Israelite, however often bitten by the serpents of the desert, simply "looked on the serpent of brass and lived," (Num. xxi. 9;) and a believer from day to day recovers from the poison of corruption by *beholding* the Lord. He is "changed into the same image," (2 Cor. iii. 18,) by simply *beholding* the Lord—so wonderfully comprehensive is his call, "Behold *Me!* Behold *Me!*"

And it has endless variety in it; for who can search out Godhead? Heaven may be said to consist of an eternal beholding of God. This is the "Beatific Vision" that the fathers spoke of; and it was a dim, yet real, glimpse of this that made one of our

forefathers cry, "O for one broad sight of His face before we go hence and be no more!" What a day shall that be when he comes again, revealing himself in all his love, loveliness, grace, glory, and when, inviting us to draw near, he shall say, "Behold *Me!* Behold *Me!* Here am I. Your cup is full!"

4. Fellow-sinner, perhaps the Lord has met you, showing you sin, and the sting of death for sin. It was thus he drew near to Isaiah on one occasion, (chap. vi. ;) it was thus he spoke his "*Behold Me!*" to Job, (chap. xl.) He may intend that the strength of the terrible tempest's blast should drive you to this refuge the more speedily. This was the case with one not long ago, who tells us, "I pronounced sentence of death on myself, and in another moment found myself saved by being cast into the arms of Jesus."

A day like this may be to your soul like that day to Manoah's wife, when, going forth to the field to her wonted toil, she met the glorious Angel of the covenant, whose name was "Wonderful." She returned home awed and thoughtful, longing to get at all the truth of that visit from God; and surely wise was her conclusion: "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us all these things." It is because he has no pleasure at all in your death, but desires for you life everlasting, that he has so often now spoken in your ear, "**BEHOLD ME! BEHOLD ME!**"

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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A CONTRAST, AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT.



PICTURE to yourself a room in a small alley of a low district in one of our large towns. It contains little or no furniture. There is a fire, and—being evening—a lamp burns upon a narrow mantel-shelf. In the corner of the room lies what, at first, looks like a heap of clothes, but it is a woman, thrown there by her husband, who has just been “punishing” her. Her face is smashed, and so much swollen that one can hardly distinguish the features. Two human harpies—women with grimy faces, black hair, and black eyes—are looking on. But the most prominent person on the scene is the husband. He is wild with rage; storming, abusing, cursing, first his wife, lying motion-

less in the corner, then the two companions, who had helped her to get rid of the money he had given her to pay some debts.

In the midst of this noise, my knock at the door was unheard. I opened, and stood in the midst of it.

The man was too infuriated to heed my presence, and went straight on, with language which I have rarely heard equalled for brutality. The very harpies were frightened, and slunk out. As the torrent of words ceased, I abruptly said, "Let us pray," and fell on my knees. To my surprise the man followed my example, and even the heap in the corner gathered itself up and knelt, while I entreated the Lord to come into that home as a Saviour—to break the chains of sin, and set the captives free.

An intense conviction that only his presence and power could effect this, pervaded my soul; and a strange solemn thrill went through me, as I felt God's ear was bent down and listening. Like a flash came: "If we know that He heareth us, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of him." Under the sway of those words, I said to the man, as I rose:—

"Do *you* believe God will answer that prayer?"

"No, I do *not*," was the reply. "She's been a bad, wicked woman. Now, I'll tell you."

"No, don't," I pleaded; "we have only the present to deal with."

"Well, then, the present. She went to your meeting last week, and I hear she stayed after to speak to you. The wretched hypocrite! She went straight from you to the public-house, and spent all the money I had given her to pay the rent on drink, and she's been at it ever since, till she's emptied the house of everything, and she'll never be no better. No prayer will ever be answered for her, and she shall

never go again to your meeting to play the saint and act the sinner. I'll be no party to it."

"Now, listen to me," I said. "When we were praying, I felt sure God was listening, and I've known him bring his saving power to bear upon many women as bad as your wife. I believe he is going to save her from her sins, and then you will have a very different home from what you have to-night. But I want you to do one thing. Allow her to come to-morrow to the meeting. I only beg for once. If you see no change in her ways before next Sunday, when I mean to come in and see you again, then I shan't ask you to allow her to come any more. Will you? And one thing more. Do keep your hands off that poor woman. If one of those blows you have given her had hit on a fatal spot—and you were too much beside yourself to direct their aim—she would have lain at your feet a senseless corpse, and you would have been a murderer, and had to hang for it, or fly!"

He looked awestruck, and I seized the moment to secure my promise.

"Now, just these two things—Promise to keep your hands off your wife, and let her come to me to-morrow."

He was under the spell of what might have been, and said, "I will." I added no more, and left the house.

Just round the corner lived a Scotch woman, whose character I love to linger over, for it possesses some Christian traits in a degree that I have never seen equalled by any of his followers.

Full of the scene I had just left, I went to my Scotch friend, and, telling her of it, asked her to call for the lost sister, and bring her to my meeting the following day.

At the close of the meeting, the two were waiting together to speak to me. As they passed in to the

inner room, sacred from many associations, the Scotch woman whispered :—

"I've not been able to keep her from drink to-day, but she wants to sign the pledge."

I looked at her, as she sat before the fire—a more hopeless candidate for the pledge could hardly have presented herself. The drinking "bout" was not over yet. She was longing to be away, to be at it again, I felt sure.

"Should we not leave the pledge till next week?" I said softly, turning round to look into the tender quiet face beside me.

Very deliberately, but with a gentle firmness of tone, came the answer :—

"I think not."

"Then, will *you* pray?" I said.

We all knelt, and now followed what I should most earnestly desire to give word for word, for here lies the secret of "how it came about;" but I can only give the impression that prayer made on my mind—on my whole nature. A very vivid one, which has often reverted since.

Again there was a felt Presence. But it did not seem as the evening before, an ear awake and listening, bent down from heaven. It was the very God made flesh, who dwelt among us, and said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He was there. "His touch had still its ancient power." We carried between us one sick of the palsy, unable to take one step towards him, with her shaky limbs, and we laid her down at his feet. We two together claimed the power of the Lord that was present to heal. For, as that calm prayer was uttered, my faith—wavering to begin with—caught the certainty of expectation and assurance in another's heart. The difficulties of the case presented no obstacles, when the soul's eye saw

Jesus. The only thing that ever limits his power to work, ("he could there do no mighty works because of their unbelief,") had vanished. I added a few words of thanksgiving, that he had undertaken the cure; the pledge was signed, and they departed, leaving me lost in wonder, love, and praise.

"Why?" you say; "the prayer was not answered yet."

"Unanswered yet? Oh, do not say ungranted.

The work began when first your prayer was uttered,

And God will finish what he has begun."

"At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth."

Picture the same house, about the same hour, on the following Sunday evening. When I knocked, the door was opened promptly by my old friend. A face as clean as soap could make it, hair neatly brushed, features reduced to natural proportions, and fairly beaming with kindly welcome. A freshly-washed print dress on, and a bright "Come in; we was looking for you."

No wonder the face beamed. What a happy-looking home! A strong lamp on the table, in the middle of the room, showed how spotlessly clean and polished up everything in the place was; chairs, table, fender, floor. The hearth was well swept, and the fire glowed. On the table lay a large Bible open, and in his armchair beside it sat the furious husband of last week, with the most benevolent smile on. Could I believe my eyes? I exclaimed, "What a contrast!"

"Yes, all the difference betwixt hell and heaven," he said.

"And do you connect this with the prayer of last Sunday?" I asked.

"I can't choose but," he said; "I never knew the like. Never had

such a week with her since we was married. When hoo's (she's) good, hoo is good. I tell her I'll let her go to that meeting as often as hoo likes, I will."

"Don't you think we should thank God?"

"Yea, that we should," they both said. I am sure grateful hearts joined in that thanksgiving.

"I've always said I should never have been as bad as I have been, if I had any one to give me a helping hand up," said the woman, as we rose. "And now God has sent me his messengers. Her," (indicating with her thumb the Scotch woman round the corner,) "and you. But remember, it's her faith and yours as is keeping me up this week. I've not laid hold for myself yet."

My mind was full of that fact as I went to a meeting of our Christian workers that evening, and I laid the case fully before them. Vicarious faith had brought reformation, but we wanted more. At the back of any sinner laying hold of Christ's saving power must be God inspiring the will; and we unitedly asked him to breathe into her heart new desires, and to bring the same to good effect.

Three months passed, and during that time I heard the words over and over again from our poor friend: "I thank God every day for sending his messengers to me, for I'd have been lost if they hadn't come; but I haven't laid hold for myself yet."

At the end of that time she came to me, no wail in her tone now. "At last I've laid hold for myself. I was so vile I couldn't do aught

but lay me down before Him, and he raised me up, and forgave me all. You don't know near how wicked I've been, but he does; and now I've give myself to him, and he's give himself for me, and I'm his. So we'll thank him together."

I began, but soon she broke in, her heart too full for my more measured words. Hers were like "walking and leaping, and praising God."

I tell of what happened three years ago. The beaming face comes constantly to our meetings—the pledge has remained unbroken, through many tests. At one time, when her husband was out of work, she could only get cleaning to do in a public-house, where she was often asked to take a glass. One time, there had been trouble at home with her sister, who came to live with her. The sister was drinking, the husband was drinking; together they raked up the past against her, and taunted her with it. I was away from home. She rushed out to the public-house where she was employed. In her despair, she took the offered glass in her hand; but—as she told me afterwards—"God didn't let me taste it; and I said that day to myself, 'If I starve, I'll not work any more in them places;' so I've give it all up." A kind woman, in a milkshop, was able to put a little work in her way, so that she was not led into temptation, but delivered from the evil. So she continues unto *this* day, and I am persuaded that "He is able to keep that which we have committed to him until *that* day."

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SOMETHING TO DO FOR EVERY DAY.



HISTORY does not say, but well might it be the first morning of the New Year, when the Hebrew writer of sacred song looked up from the house-top, or from his tent-door, and, addressing the great Author, Sustainer, and Sweetener of his life, said, "Every day will I bless thee."

1. *It is a good resolve.* Might we not all join in it? It would be a

hard heart that would bluntly refuse, and say, "I will *not* bless God every day." And yet, without the bluntness, this is actually done by many who hardly know they are doing it. For it is just here that the ungodly, and those who would shudder to be thought ungodly, often practically meet and practically live, on the same level of unblessed existence.

Have we ever made it our determination never to let a day pass without some express and secret act of blessing God?

We rise in the morning, and with the putting on of our clothes put on our resolves too, for the day:—"I will write a letter,"—"I will go to the bank to-day,"—"I will order some stuff in,"—"I will meet my friend,"—"I will be patient no longer with that unpleasantness;" and so on,—resolves better or worse;—and perhaps no place is found in the list for this, the best of all,—“I will bless God,”—"Every day will I bless thee." It is a good resolve.

2. *It is a bounden duty.* God is blessing us every day—how richly we never know. It can only be revealed when the Books are opened in the eternal world. He showers blessings on us every moment. Nor do we deserve the least of these,—we unworthy creatures, unprofitable servants. He is slow to anger, ready to forgive; he is merciful and gracious, and full of compassion.

It is a positive sin not to bless God every day. And it is one of those sins which are specially influential in smoothing the way for other sins to be thoughtlessly and easily indulged.

None of us can fully realise how serious the neglect of *any* duty is. But this duty in its neglect must be the most serious of all. It is as though an accountant should drop a figure out of his calculations each day, and then stand amazed that his books should be so difficult to balance at the end of the year.

Let appearances be what they may, it cannot be all the same to us whether this carelessness, this blundering, enters into our daily life or no. It is a bounden duty,—to bless God.

3. *It is a noble attitude.* The soul here looks up to God with an eye of recognition,—with a smiling face,—and a heart glowing with thankful-

ness,—with outstretched arm, and open hand, as if to grasp the hand of God, and call him friend.

Such an attitude implies divine fellowship; a heart in some measure living above the world,—above its din, its strifes, its cares, and confusions. Look at man as he stands in the material universe,—he is a being of small magnitude. The strength of the hills is not his,—he cannot run like the antelope, nor soar like the eagle, nor build a house for himself as the bees can,—nor has he the wisdom of the spider, or the perfection of the ants in civil government.

But whatever man is not, or cannot do, he has a soul more expansive than the whole creation,—he can surmount the stars, and as one friend with another he can stand with the Almighty Maker of all things, and say to him, "I will bless thee,"—"Every day will I bless thee." It is a noble attitude.

4. *It is a profitable habit.* The soul that blesses God can never be un-blessed itself. The habit has health and brightness in it. It is like drawing a curtain to let the sunlight in; or opening a window to admit the fresh air when it is sweetly scented with summer flowers.

What do we do when we bless God? Not the same that he does when he blesses us. He gives us good things. His blessing means the bestowment of some enriching good. But we cannot bless him in that way. We have nothing of our own to give, *but thanks*. We can only bless him by being thankful: and it is the only thing he asks of us; for, getting this, he is sure to get all else.

A thankful heart never can be destitute, and never can be idle. It is rich with the best of creature riches, and steadfastly unwearied in service to its benefactor. To bless God every day is a profitable habit.

5. *It has a sanctified sameness in it*,—a divine monotony that grows not tiresome. Have you considered how much beholden we are to such monotonous conditions? The daylight never changes its colour, nor the blue sky, nor the verdant grass, nor the saintly snow. It is always the same yellow sunlight. The weather, too, is monotonous by its very changefulness. Those stars we see are the same that glittered in the eyes of Abraham. And it is the same bread which the earth yields from age to age.

So to speak, it is the same old ship we are sailing in, the same crew, the same queer set of passengers, and the same unending alternations of day and night, of calm and stormy weather. Nor do we often credit this sameness with the rich blessing that is in it.

One has said, "Blessed be drudgery!" It might well be added, "Blessed be monotony!" Have you not felt, sometimes, when the children were about you, and the fireside was bright, and the table had its daily bread on it,—felt the impulse to exclaim, "O that it might continue thus always! That the children might be children always, and home, home always!" It was under this feeling men of old time gave the finest name possible to Jehovah, when they called him "Ancient of Days."

Blessed then be monotony, blessed in the highest, when it is a daily sacrifice of benediction rising to heaven! Our days will change. But the old patriarchal habit need not change: "*Every day will I bless thee.*" Some days will be bright, some dark, some hopeful, some fearful,—what, or how many, we cannot tell.

But in the ever-present "Ancient of Days" our hope rests, and our comfort lies; in him no homes are broken up, nor ties of true love ever snapped asunder. To him our thanks

are due. To him shall our praises rise continually. His worthiness, trustworthiness, changes not. His love and power, his wisdom and mercy, are in and over all. We may well bless him every day, and all day long!

The benediction, "Every day will I bless thee," has a sanctified sameness in it.

6. *It has a cheerful outlook for every morning.* It begins the day with a prophecy, and a thanksgiving for the unknown goodness which the day contains.

It is said of one of the old monks that he saw his little store of provisions diminishing day by day; until one morning there was not a morsel to break his fast with. But he was a man of faith; and, though he had only an empty dish to bend over, he closed his eyes, and proceeded with his usual thanksgiving for what he was about to receive. Meanwhile the God of the ravens that fed Elijah came down to visit his poor dwelling,—and, behold, to the opening and astonished eyesight of the aged man, there stood the dish with plenty in it, wherewith he was well fed, and well satisfied.

The old legend has a parable of plain truth for us, namely, this,—That our empty need will not be left empty, if we go forth to the untried duties and temptations of the day thankful for promises not yet fulfilled, and for mercies not yet received.

The benediction has a cheerful outlook in it for a dark morning: "Every day will I bless thee."

7. *It has strength in it for the busy noontide.* It will keep you from sinking down when overwhelmed by having too much to do; or when the noontide brings the sorrow of having less to do than you could wish. It will put the strength of steel into your principles, when the terrible risk arises that a breakdown there may be the ruin of all.

In business principle one may be expected to be strong who feels that every moment owes a thanksgiving to God,—not forgetful, too, that God and he are within speaking distance of each other.

Remember at all times that your business is God's business, and the more it presses the more need there is that the thought of God should enter into it, to keep it from going wrong. The benediction has strength in it for your stewardship by day.

8. *It has a pillow at night for the weary head to rest on.* It has the patience and peace of Christ in it. It will help you to say truly,—

"I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience."

"I have had a hard day, long hours, heavy drudgery; mind, sinew, nerve strained from morning to night. There has been hardness in my lot to-day, but, thank God! no dishonour. Plenty to be forgiven, before God; but nothing to recall, to be, before man, ashamed of; nothing I dare not bless God for. It will be the same hardness to-morrow, —perhaps greater. Yes, yes; an old story; and the same old remedy too: 'Still trust in God, for I shall yet praise him.' 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'"

9. *Last and best, it has Christ himself in it.* We are told Abraham saw Christ's day and was glad; but not so clearly could he see it as any child now can do who reads the Gospels. The years have brought down to us

a great inheritance. They lay upon us, too, a great responsibility.

What have we to bless God for?

For Christ chiefly, source and sum of all mercies; the Father's image, the pledge of his love;—Christ our hope, the anchor of our troubled soul;—Christ our sacrifice,—the true and living Way, the Intercessor, through whom come to us pardon, and purification, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Teacher and Comforter.

What do we owe to the generations that come after us? Cannot we do something to make the benediction richer when men bless God in days to come? Or must we leave the world without helping it now, and after this, into a deeper sense of its indebtedness to Christ?

And when the summer is ended, and the harvest past,—so great a summer of privilege, and such a harvest of God's mercies,—all ended, all past,—must it be confessed after all, and notwithstanding all, that "we are not saved"?

Reader, they are both yours, the heritage and the responsibility; you have no escape from either,—they are both yours; and as the heritage is rich in grace and truth, so is the responsibility fearful!

Forget not God; nor be unmindful of his benefits. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name. If you have rejected the Saviour, and grieved his Spirit, hitherto, there is yet, by the tender mercy of your God, a sparing of the fruitless tree,—*"Let it alone this year also; if it bear fruit, well: if not, after that thou shalt cut it down."* (Luke xiii. 9.)

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“I KNOW IT, BUT I CANNOT FEEL.”



See page 2.

DESPAIR is the sternest of tyrants, as he holds in bondage even the disposition to rebel. This was perhaps never more clearly seen than in the case of a man I was once called upon unexpectedly to visit. He was taken sick of the illness of which he died, and when I first saw him had been ailing already some weeks.

The poor fellow was upon his bed,

and gave evidence in various ways that the “arrow of the Almighty was sticking fast in him.” He was evidently smitten with death, and just as evidently smitten with despair. I spent some time with him, that I might learn something of his history and of his state of mind, and so get a more accurate idea of the difficulty I had to meet.

I found him to be a small farmer, labouring on his own few acres, and supporting by that means his aged mother and himself. The mother was an ignorant woman, living in the habitual neglect of religious means, and to all appearance without a thought beyond the food she ate, the clothes she wore, and the cottage she inhabited. Who can wonder, if we train our children to live without God in infancy, that when they are old they will not depart from such ways? Thus it was here: the mother proclaimed by her life that God was not in all her thoughts, what wonder was it to find, then, that what knowledge of God the son had, exerted little or no influence upon his life?

On hearing his account of himself, I laboured to bring him to a right state of mind concerning his former mode of life, and in reference to his present position. I reminded him of such texts as these—"All unrighteousness is sin." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Come now, let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." To which he replied—and I shall never forget the tone of blank despair in which he uttered the words—not raving like one astonished to find himself cast off at the moment of his direst necessity, but as one who had made up his mind to the worst:

"Sir, I know all you would say to me, and I know all you would have me do; I know I am a sinner, and that I ought to be sorry for my sins (and there is reason for it, too); I know that Christ is a Saviour, and I ought to believe in him for my salvation; and I know that this time I shall die, and that I shall be cast

into hell. But though I know it all, I cannot feel."

He then went on to tell me how he knew that this time he should die, and his words were as follows: "This is the third time I have been taken in this way. The first time I was greatly frightened, and could not sleep night or day. So I began to pray to God to raise me up again, and vowed, if he did, I would lead a better life. He did raise me up again, and for a time I was an altered man. It was then that I used to go and hear you preach, and, having a good memory, I could bring home your sermons in my head, and repeat them to my old mother here.

"But it did not last long. I broke out again, and fell to drinking and swearing, and other evil ways, worse than before, until in a few months I was taken ill again with the same complaint. And then, oh, sir! it was dreadful. I was in a worse fright than before; for besides the dread of dying in my sins, I had the horror of remembering that I had broken my vows, that though God had done his part in raising me up, I had not done my part in turning from my evil ways. In my agony I again turned to him, I again repented, I again prayed, I again vowed as before; and again God heard me, and restored me to health. But what was very remarkable, I was only a few weeks out of bed this time before I went on worse than ever, and now here I am the third time, and I know it is all over with me, and yet I can neither repent, nor feel in any way sorry for my sins, nor do I feel any kind of alarm though I know I am lost. This, sir, is the worst symptom of my case,—*I cannot feel.*"

Yes, poor fellow, it was the worst symptom of his case; for to be "past feeling" is, even by inspired teaching, declared to be one of the most determined proofs of wickedness,

and one of the most hopeless fore-runners of destruction. All manner of sin and blasphemy is pardonable, and shall be forgiven unto those who have been washed in the fountain of the Redeemer's blood, but unbelief is its own ruin. The man who is so dead in trespasses and sins as to be utterly indifferent about his own state, and callous about the future—how shall he be sufficiently roused to apply for the remedy, (the Balm in Gilead,) to heal him? They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But who is to heal the sick man who neither applies to the physician for advice, nor takes the only medicine that can remove his malady? and who is so utterly "without hope in the world" as he who ceases to feel or care? Who can save the man that thrusts from him the only plank that can bring him to shore? Who can relieve the man that stabs the friend who comes to save him from the falling house? Who can slake the raging thirst of him who dashes from him the last cup of water within reach?

And just such is the condition of the man who knows his need of a Saviour, but is so utterly without feeling as to refuse to apply to him. "He is able to save to the uttermost," it is true, but whom? "Them that come unto God by him." Again it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "Us," whom? Who "confess our sins," and who "walk in the light." So also it is written, "All things are possible." To whom are they possible? "To him that believeth." But to him that believeth not, even grace itself becomes like "salt that has lost its savour;" the promises are converted into threats, and hell is reached in neglecting heaven.

There is no reason to suppose this poor man ever stepped beyond

the threshold of despair till his eyes and ears were sealed in death.

But surely this history is admonitory to us; it may well warn us of the danger of trifling with convictions. This poor man, after having serious convictions of sin, and after making solemn promises of amendment, relapsed and became worse than before. And what says the scripture? "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

O my reader, beware of trifling with convictions! beware of returning to the indulgence of sins, the evils of which you have seen, and the continuance in which will prove your ruin. Flee at once from the wrath to come, lest a deathbed find you altogether past feeling, and, like poor T—H—, stunned with despair.

It is pitiable to see a man in the street who has been stricken with paralysis, trailing his poor leg after him as if it were dead. But a more terrible thing it is to have a *paralysed soul*—a heart *utterly past feeling*! And yet, this is the deadly disease for which multitudes are preparing themselves; especially young people brought up in religious families, and Sunday scholars. I know hundreds of them; I have tried to warn not a few. They have all had convictions, and invitations to Jesus, but they keep saying, No, not yet—a little more sin, a little more indulgence, *and then. Then what?* Why then, perhaps, there comes on that dreadful paralysis, and they are past feeling!

Take this other case:—A physician called upon a young man who was ill. He sat for a little by the bedside, examining his patient, and then he honestly told him the sad intelligence that he had but a very short time to live. The young man was astonished; he did not expect it would come to that so soon. He

forgot that death comes "in such an hour as ye think not." At length he looked up in the face of the doctor, and with a most despairing countenance repeated the expression, "*I have missed it—at last.*"

"What have you missed?" inquired the tender-hearted, sympathising physician.

"*I have missed it—at last,*" again the young man repeated.

The doctor, not in the least comprehending what the young man meant, said—"My dear young man, will you be so good as to tell me what you"—

He instantly interrupted, saying, "Oh, doctor, it is a sad story—a sad—a sad story that I have to tell. But *I have missed it.*"

"Missed what?"

"Doctor, *I have missed the salvation of my soul.*"

"Oh, say not so! It is not so. Do you remember the thief on the cross?"

"Yes, I remember the thief on the cross. And I remember that *he* never said to the Holy Spirit—Go thy way. But *I did.* And now he is saying to me—Go *your way.*"

He lay gasping a while, and, looking up with a vacant, staring eye, he said—"I was awakened, and was anxious about my soul a little time ago. But I did not want salvation then. Something seemed to say to me—*Don't put off—make sure of salvation.* I said to myself, I will postpone it. I knew I ought not to do it. I knew I was a great sinner, and needed a Saviour. I resolved, however, to dismiss the subject for the

present. Yet I could not get my own consent to do it, until I had promised that I would take it up again, at a time not remote and more favourable. I bargained away, insulted, and grieved away the Holy Spirit. I never thought of coming to this. I meant to make my salvation sure. And now, *I have missed it—at last.*"

"You remember that there were some who came at the eleventh hour?"

"My eleventh hour was when I had that call of the Spirit. I have had none since—shall not have. I am given over to be lost."

"Not lost—you may yet be saved."

"No—not saved—never. He tells me I may go my way now. I know it—I feel it—feel it here," laying his hand upon his heart. Then he burst out, in despairing agony, "*Oh, I have missed it! I have sold my soul for nothing—a feather—a straw—undone for ever!*"

This was said with such unutterable, indescribable despondency, that no words were said in reply.

After lying a few moments, he raised his head, and, looking all round the room as if for some desired object—turning his eyes in every direction—then, burying his face in the pillow, he again exclaimed, in agony and horror, "*Oh, I have missed it at last!*" and he died.

Reader, you need not miss *your* salvation, for you may have it NOW. What you have read are true stories. How awfully in earnest they say to you, "*Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation!*"

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“IT IS GOD THAT JUSTIFIETH.”

ROMANS viii. 33.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



See page 3.

A WONDERFUL thing is this being justified, or made just. If we had never broken the laws of God we should not have needed it; for we should have been just in ourselves. He who has all his life done the things which he ought to have done, and has never done anything which he ought not to have done, is justified by the law. But you, dear reader, are not of that sort, I am quite sure. You have too much honesty to pretend to be without sin, and therefore you need to be justified. Now, if you justify yourself, you will simply be a self-deceiver. There-

fore do not attempt it. It is never worth while.

If you ask your fellow-mortals to justify you, what can they do? You can make some of them speak well of you for sixpence; and others will backbite you for less than that. Their judgment is not worth much.

Our text says, "It is God that justifieth," and this is a deal more to the point. It is an astonishing fact, and one that we ought to consider with care. Come and see.

In the first place, *nobody else but God would ever have thought of justifying those who are guilty.* They have lived in open rebellion; they have done evil with both hands; they have gone from bad to worse; they have turned back to sin even after they have smarted for it, and have therefore for a while been forced to leave it. They have broken the law, and trampled on the gospel. They have refused proclamations of mercy, and have persisted in ungodliness. How can they be forgiven and justified? Their fellow-men, despairing of them, say, "They are hopeless cases." Even Christians look upon them with sorrow rather than with hope. But not so their God. He, in the splendour of his electing grace, having chosen some of them before the foundation of the world, will not rest till he has justified them, and made them to be accepted in the Beloved. Is it not written, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"? Thus you see there are some whom the Lord resolves to justify: why should not you and I be of the number?

None but a God would ever have thought of justifying *me*. I am a wonder to myself. I doubt not that grace is equally seen in others. Look at Saul of Tarsus, who foamed at the mouth against God's servants. Like

a hungry wolf, he worried the lambs and the sheep right and left; and yet God struck him down on the road to Damascus, and changed his heart, and so fully justified him that, ere long, this man became the greatest preacher of justification by faith that ever lived. He must often have marvelled that ever *he* was justified by faith in Christ Jesus; for he was once a determined stickler for salvation by the works of the law. None but God would have ever thought of justifying such a man as Saul the persecutor; but the Lord God is glorious in grace.

But even if anybody had thought of justifying the ungodly, *none but God could have done it.* It is quite impossible for any person to forgive offences which have not been committed against himself. A person has greatly injured you; you can forgive him, and I hope you will: but no third person can forgive him apart from you. If the wrong is done to you, the pardon must come from you. If we have sinned against God, it is in God's power to forgive; for the sin is against himself. That is why David says, in the fifty-first Psalm, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;" for then God, against whom the offence is committed, can put the offence away. That which we owe to God, our great Creditor can remit, if so it pleases him; and if he remits it, it is remitted. None but the great God, against whom we have committed the sin, can blot out that sin; let us, therefore, see that we go to him and seek mercy at his hands.

Only God can justify the ungodly; but *he can do it to perfection.* He casts our sins behind his back, he blots them out; he says that though they be sought for, they shall not be found. With no other reason for it but his own infinite goodness, he has prepared a glorious way by which he can make scarlet sins as white as

snow, and remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west. He says, "I will not remember your sins." He goes the length of making an end of sin. One of old called out in amazement, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

We are not now speaking of justice, nor of God's dealing with men according to their deserts. If you profess to deal with the righteous Lord on law terms, everlasting wrath threatens you, for that is what you deserve. Blessed be his name, he has not dealt with us after our sins; but now he treats with us on terms of free grace and infinite compassion, and he says, "I will receive you graciously, and love you freely." Believe it, for it is certainly true that the great God is able to treat the guilty with abundant mercy; yea, he is able to treat the ungodly as if they had been always godly. Read carefully the parable of the prodigal son, and see how the forgiving father received the returning wanderer with as much love as if he had never gone away, and had never defiled himself with harlots. So far did he carry this that the elder brother began to grumble at it; but the father never withdrew his love. O my brother, however guilty you may be, if you will only come back to your God and Father, he will treat you as if you had never done wrong. He will regard you as just, and deal with you accordingly. What say you to this?

Do you not see—for I want to bring this out clearly, what a splendid thing it is—that as none but God would think of justifying the ungodly, and none but God could do it, yet the Lord can do it? See how the apostle puts the challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of

God's elect? It is God that justifieth." If God has justified a man, it is well done, it is rightly done, it is justly done, it is everlastingly done. I read the other day in a print which is full of venom against the gospel and those who preach it, that we hold some kind of theory by which we imagine that sin can be removed from men. We hold no theory, we publish a fact. The grandest fact under heaven is this—that Christ by his precious blood does actually put away sin; and that God, for Christ's sake, dealing with men on terms of divine mercy, forgives the guilty and justifies them, not according to anything that he sees in them or foresees will be in them, but according to the riches of his mercy which lie in his own heart. "It is God that justifieth"—that justifieth the ungodly; he is not ashamed of doing it, nor are we of preaching it.

The justification which comes from God himself must be beyond question. If the Judge acquits me, who can condemn me? If the highest court in the universe has pronounced me just, who shall lay anything to my charge? Justification from God is a sufficient answer to an awakened conscience. The Holy Spirit by its means breathes peace over our entire nature, and we are no longer afraid. With this justification we can answer all the roarings and railings of Satan and ungodly men. With this we shall be able to die; with this we shall boldly rise again, and face the last great assize.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While by my Lord absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."

Friend, *the Lord can blot out all your sins*. I make no shot in the dark when I say this. "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Though you are steeped up to your throat in crime, he can with a word remove the defile-

ment, and say, "I will, be thou clean." The Lord is a great forgiver.

"I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS." DO YOU ?

He can even at this hour pronounce the sentence, "Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace;" and if he do this, no power in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, can put you under suspicion, much less under wrath. Do not doubt the power of Almighty love. *You* could not forgive your fellow-man had he offended you as you have offended God; but you must not measure God's corn with your bushel; his thoughts and ways are as much above yours as the heavens are high above the earth.

"Well," say you, "it would be a great miracle if the Lord were to pardon me." Just so. It would be a supreme miracle, and therefore he is likely to do it: for he does "great things and unsearchable" which we looked not for.

I was myself stricken down with a horrible sense of guilt, which made my life a misery to me; but when I heard the command, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else,"—I looked, and in a moment the Lord justified me. Jesus Christ, made sin for me, was what I saw, and that sight gave me rest. When those who were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness looked to the serpent of brass, they were healed at once; and so was I when I looked to the crucified Saviour. The Holy Spirit, who enabled me to believe, gave me peace through believing. I felt as sure that

I was forgiven as before I felt sure of condemnation. I had been certain of my condemnation because the word of God declared it, and my conscience bore witness to it; but when the Lord justified me I was made equally certain by the same witnesses. The word of the Lord in the Scripture saith, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned," and my conscience bears witness that I believed, and that God in pardoning me is just. Thus I have the witness of the Holy Spirit and my own conscience, and these two agree in one. Oh, how I wish that my reader would receive the testimony of God upon this matter, and then full soon he would also have the witness in himself!

I venture to say that a sinner justified by God stands on even a surer footing than a righteous man justified by his works, if such there be. We could never be sure that we had done enough works: conscience would always be uneasy lest, after all, we should come short, and we could only have the trembling verdict of a fallible judgment to rely upon. But when God himself justifies, and the Holy Spirit bears witness thereto by giving us peace with God, why, then, we feel that the matter is sure and settled, and we enter into rest. No tongue can tell the depth of that calm which comes over the soul which has received the peace of God which passeth all understanding. *Friend, do seek it AT ONCE.*

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CONQUERED BY LOVE.



HE was a poor, fretful, fitful old man. No one thought well of him. His wife had borne with him—as good wives will bear with *awkward* husbands—patiently and well, while youth and hope were hers; but as the years gathered, and her hair grew white with sorrow and age, Martha Stuart's spirit seemed broken, and she found herself drifting fast into a

snappish, nagging, morose-tempered woman: at first with real sorrow and anguish of spirit, but as time went on, excusing herself on the ground that no wife had been quite as much tried as she had been with "her John," and no woman had more cause to regret marrying.

It was an evening in early autumn when John was brought home with

a broken leg, the result of a public-house fight. The nearest hospital was three miles away, and John said he was not going to be tormented with a long *jerky* ride; no, he would go straight home, and "his missis" must nurse him. (This was to the doctor who had been called in when the accident happened at the "Setting Sun.") And thus it came to pass that Martha found life harder to be borne than ever with "her John" laid up with his broken leg. He was a bad subject for an accident. The doctor, patient and good as he was, grew a little weary of the long time the leg took to set, and when this was accomplished, other needs for quiet lying-up had arisen, and John continued a prisoner to his room and bed.

Thus the winter passed and spring. It was the first week in May. Martha had gone down the village in the evening to have a little chat with an old friend, to whom she was in the habit of airing her grievances. John lay alone, grumbling and groaning, upstairs. The cat lay quietly sleeping in the window. This was the most comforting little bit in his surroundings to John as he mused upon his lonely and much-tried condition.

"The only thing that's anyways pleasant," he said to himself, while watching pussy; "I wish I were a cat, and then I could sleep all day and forget my pains. Life would be a bit cheerier to a wicked old chap like me, if I thought now that I could end my days as pussy will end hers; lay down and die, and there be no more of me in that unknown world!"

The opening of the door downstairs disturbed John's meditations. It was a stranger's footfall. Surely some one had knocked, and, receiving no attention, had walked in.

"Who's there?" shouted old John hoarsely.

"A friend. May I come up?" was the answer given, in cheery, hearty tones.

"What's your name? I've got no friends; you've come to the wrong house," called out old John, each portion of his sentence falling with distinct utterance.

"If it's the wrong house, it's the right *man* I've found at home," said the same cheery voice, so sounding, that it was unmistakeably evident "the friend" was finding his way upstairs. In half a moment more he stood in the doorway—a broad-shouldered man, with a round beaming face. His eyes had a merry twinkle, and his well-shaven mouth looked irresistibly sweet as a smile played about it.

Old John *looked* astonished, but *said* nothing.

"You wonder who I am?" said the stranger, seating himself at the foot of old John's bed. "Well, I'll tell ye. My name's Jack Smart, and by trade I'm a blacksmith. I've come south with Farmer Dennis—leastways he persuaded me to come when he gave his farm in Cheshire up to his son, and moved this way—he's yonder at the Holm Lee farm; I daresay now you have heard tell of him? Well, now, that's who I am; and if you'd like to know a bit of my family history, well, I've one of the sweetest little wives as ever trod shoe leather, and a pair of baby boys, twins, who both found their feet before they were twelve months old!"

By this time old John began to think that this stranger was pleasanter company than the cat. He had a bright way of talking, and his smile was like the sunshine. John's voice was very much softened as he said,—

"Well, but what's your business with me?"

"Ay, *now* we're coming to the point," said the stranger, rubbing his hands; "you may well ask!

Now listen a bit, and I'll explain. You know there is a certain little mission-room round the corner, where a few of us meet for prayer every Friday night. Well, we always remember absent ones—those who would like to be with us but can't, and those—some at least—who *could* come but won't! Now, somehow you got in along with these 'absent friends to be remembered,' about six weeks ago, and we've prayed hard for you ever since!"

"Prayed—prayed for *me*?" exclaimed old John, almost breathless with astonishment.

"Yes," said the stranger, smiling; "we knew you were a bit weary of your bed, and we *somehow* felt you were, maybe, a bit weary at heart too, and so we've been asking for you all sorts of blessings."

"It's good of you," said old John, really touched; "but however can *you* care for a poor old hardened sinner you don't know nothing about?"

The stranger came a little bit nearer, as he put his own hand upon old John's, and said tenderly,—

"God loves you, brother; God is love. He puts a bit of love into our hearts, and there we are—we can't help loving, and that means *longing* for folks to be happy; and that means wanting them to come straight to the dear Saviour for the pardon of their sins. An old sinner, are you, hardened in wickedness? Ay, but God's love can shine upon your heart with such power that it shall melt—yes, melt clean soft!"

Old John was weeping.

"Didn't I tell you I came as a friend?" continued Jack Smart; "and I've brought you a lovely message, all for your very own self: 'God willeth not that any should perish.' Now, you've all along chosen to turn your back to the Cross; but it wasn't God's will. He willed that you should face it,

look up to it. See the Saviour upon it—*your* Saviour—dying for *your* sins! Eh, but you are to be pitied! Think what you've lost, friend. The tender help and care of this Saviour! Your sins? why, of course, they kept you in hand; you were their servant—their slave; but if only you had known the One who loved you and gave himself for you—the One *who conquers* sin for us and in us—eh, what a different chap you would have been!"

"Is it too late now?" asked old John, in a hoarse whisper.

"Praise God, no!" said Jack Smart joyfully. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He invited all the weary and sad at heart to come to him; and he gave us his word for it, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;' and he is saying to you now, friend, 'If ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart.'"

Jack Smart fell upon his knees and poured out his soul unto God. He began by praising him for revealing himself and his love to poor mortals. He went on to thank him for teaching the lost, by the Holy Spirit's influence and power, that no condition was hopeless with such a God waiting to be gracious, *such* a Saviour ready to take any poor, penitent sinner by the hand and bring him to God.

Then Jack Smart spoke of his poor sick friend, and pleaded for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Gently, tenderly, with beautiful refinement in all allusions to the "sinful past," Jack Smart brought old John nearer and yet nearer to the Cross.

Old Mrs. John found them thus, in prayer, as she crept in, after a long evening's gossip with her neighbours. She thought, as she said afterwards, that a miracle had been wrought. She left her John noisy and swearing; she found him

"as gentle as a lamb," praying earnestly for his soul's salvation.

From that day old John was a changed man.

"It was those praying chaps as did it!" he would say, with tear-filled eyes. "Think of praying for one so lost and depraved as old John! Think of *caring* for me, with all *that* care! Isn't it wonderful? But there—it's when Christ gets into men's hearts that they be a little bit like Christ himself. It's certain sure *my* gospel didn't come along with reading the Bible, or hearing sermons, but in being *loved* by those praying chaps!"

Old John did not realise at first how—having himself grasped "the truth as it is in Jesus"—he became a gospel to others; but so it was. The poor old wife was the first to be helped; John's gentle words and ways filled her with awe—of course, she feared it was too good to last, but every day proved more the reality of her husband's change. Jack Smart had the deep joy of helping old John's wife to find Him upon whom, (as she put it,) she could rest "her poor, tired, grumbling, fretful heart."

As time went on, and old John got about again, all the village people gave him welcome to their homes, many of them being "sore amazed" when the old man talked what they called "Bible talk" to them.

"You'll take a glass, neighbour, just to drink to the health of your getting about?" said a man one day, as John paid him a visit after working hours.

"No, mate," said John decidedly, "drink and old John have parted company! If we'd been less friendly in my youth I might not now be grieving, as I do, over a wasted life!"

It soon got noised about in the village that old John was a teetotaler, and possibly—as time went on and old John grew yet firmer on the subject—this fact alone helped to make men think. There *must* be some divine, strong, wonderful power at work to change that noisy, ill-tempered, good-for-nothing drunkard, old John, into that pleasant-spoken, sober, kindly-mannered old gentleman of to-day! So men reasoned; and women nodded their heads together as they spoke of a certain old lady's pride and pleasure in talking, whenever she had half a chance, of the goodness and loveableness of "her John," who seemed bent on restoring fourfold the affection and tenderness of which he had robbed her in days gone by. Old John was a living gospel in that village for years; he died at the age of ninety. The prayer-meeting which brought such blessing to him is often turned into a praise-meeting, as one and another of the village people—once openly careless and godless in life—are won to believe that "God is love," and that "he willeth not that any should perish."

Surely we do well to remember that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

*Abridged, by permission, from "Living Sermons"
by MRS. G. S. REANEY.*

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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A WHOLE YEAR'S GLADNESS.



See page 2.

SOMEWHERE in the far distant past, perhaps upwards of 3000 years ago, there lived a gifted song-writer, by whose inspired lips and fingers our souls are being fed to-day. His words are not only sweet and beautiful, they are bread of life to us.

He wrote the 90th Psalm, the aim and substance of which are expressed in these few of its simple words:

“That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” Here is—

I. *A beautiful prospect.* It seems to open up the future before us as if it were a garden, with charming walks all through it, with flowers about our feet, with fragrant air to breathe, with the music of singing-birds warbling overhead among the branches.

"Rejoice and be glad all our days:" it sounds musical, and yet how strange! We have our doubts about the future. We have our fears respecting it. We dread it. Oftentimes we would turn aside and *not* meet it, if we could; it is all so uncertain,—it is frequently so hopeless, so unpromising, so harsh and stern in the aspect it presents to us.

But here all that is changed. We have a fair country to enter on in that untrodden future. The wilderness of our fears becomes a fruitful field; and the desert of declining hopes begins to rejoice and blossom like the rose. It is a beautiful prospect. It is also—

II. *A hopeful possibility.* No mere dream, or vision of disordered imagination. Even unaided nature teaches us that we spurn most of the joy that might be ours. It is there, and we refuse to have it; or it is there, and we know it not! What, then, might not the gladness be, did we but receive what Christ and the gospel bring to us!

Gilmour, the missionary, tells of an old Irishwoman, who in her loneliness was deeply grieved because her son in America had not sent the money to pay her debts. Yet there in her hand was the Post Office Order, which his letter had brought, and she did not know the value of it. She mistook it for a useless bit of paper; and it was more than enough to supply all her wants.

Such is our common ignorance. Often, too, we *will* fret when we know we ought not; we even take pleasure in senseless murmuring and discontent. So that, if we are not glad, we have ourselves to blame for it. The fault is not in our lot, it is in our temper. But for this we might be glad indeed every day, and all day long. It is a hopeful possibility, which the 90th Psalm confirms by several things. It mentions—

III. *The shelter of God's presence.*

We dwell in him. He is our home: Eternal God—like the roof over us, the walls around us, the floor beneath our feet; our dwelling-place. From this source we may draw fresh hope for every day.

Ourselves and our affairs are changing always. The fluctuations are often startling in their suddenness, and almost beyond endurance in their painfulness. But our hope—our home—is still the unchanging God: moreover, he is the blessed God. Again, the psalm mentions—

IV. *An appeal to him in prayer.* "O satisfy us!" Home is not home if we cannot, and do not, unbosom ourselves there without restraint. And what avails it if we sing of God as our Eternal Home, and do not confide in him, and speak to him, and pray to him, as if it were really true?

Some years ago, an atheistical lecturer spoke like a true prophet when she said, (and it was the instinct of her woman's heart compelled her to say it,)—that this great universe soon becomes like a place of death, a gloomy vault, a silent, cheerless, hateful emptiness, to the soul of him who does not pray, to the soul who has lost all sense of a Father's Presence.

Prayer is most part of the secret of a blessed life; nor do we know what heritage of weakness, distrust, misery, is ours to-day, which the years gone by have left us on account of their prayerlessness. "O satisfy us early with thy mercy!" There is therefore—

V. *An experience of his mercy.* It is as if the writer had said,—I have been mercifully dealt with. The stern judgment that might have come—that was on its way to come—has been stayed. The discontent, the thanklessness, the open sins, the secret sins, the provocations that cried to heaven for judgment, have obtained from heaven the compassion which they did not crave.

God has been merciful—to me! The mercy was there long before my penitence crept forth to seek for it.

True, the angel of mercy at every step has been attending us, to keep our feet from falling, to keep our eyes from tears, to save our souls from death. Our falls have been many, but not so many as might have been—had God forsaken us! Our tears have flowed, but not with the bitterness that might have been—had God forsaken us! Our souls have trembled on the brink of the pit, but not with the hazard that might have been—had God forsaken us! Praised be his mercy! There is further—

VI. *A dependence on him for more of it.* His mercy in all its fulness is in Christ. It is there to forgive; and, having been forgiven, we may bear all else in life with equanimity. No trials then keep back our peace, any more than April showers keep back the fruitful summer-tide.

Our souls, once touched with divine mercy, are ever craving for more. Our cry is, “O satisfy us early!”—the impatient cry of a man perishing with hunger or dying of thirst—O bring it, and bring it soon! Let there be no delay!

It is sin alone stands between us and our happiness,—sin unknown, unconfessed, unrepented of,—sin unforgiven. But we read, “There is forgiveness with thee,” “Thou dearest in mercy;” “red like crimson, they shall be as wool;” and so, when we experience the free, the rich, the all-sufficing mercy of God as it flows to us through Christ, when we have “acceptance in the Beloved,” we are ready to rejoice, nay, we cannot but rejoice and be glad all our days. Troubles will come, but the forgiven heart can be calm in midst of them all, and say,—

“I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience.”

Again, the 90th Psalm reminds us how much a happy future depends on—

VII. *A sanctified use of past troubles.* We have had affliction laid upon us. It was hard to bear. Too well we can remember it, for its severity. But surely it is worth remembering on other accounts,—for its healing wounds, for its faithful discipline.

If as yet the trouble has done us no good, it must needs come back again more heavily. May the discipline of God not be spent on us in vain!

The soldier is proud to recall his hardships. Not long since, it was a heart-stirring spectacle, on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, when the old war-worn colours of the 91st Highlanders were borne, for the last time, slowly and solemnly, through the ranks, to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne.” At that moment it was the last thing any soldier could do to lament what had been endured for Queen and country.

So, it is like the unfurling of an old flag, like the hearing of an old heart-warming melody, when, at the beginning of a new year, we read,—“Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.” We will not regret past troubles. We will thank God for them. We will make the present year the brightest we have seen.

“How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind,—should e’er have borne
a part
(And that a needful part) in making up
The calm existence which is mine, when I
Am worthy of myself.”

But in order to that there must needs be—

VIII. *A clear view of God’s way of working.* “Let thy work appear unto thy servants;” let them not mistake the creature hand for thine; nor trust in foolish promises which

thou hast never made; nor forget that the last may be first, and the first last; that thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways our ways.

The widow of the two mites would have given but a poor account of herself, and of her sacrifice at the temple, as compared with that which the great Master gave. How different, too, would the rich men's account of themselves have been as compared with his!

An old man, who was in the fields trying to eke out a scanty living for himself, was asked how he came to be there. He said, "I am ane o' God's puir weavers, and he has nae wab for me the noo." If the year is to be happy, we may not expect too much from it. It may lift us high, or lay us low, but never can it lift us out of the arms of God's covenant love in Christ Jesus.

It will be a perennial joy to us, the clear recognition of the fact that God's way of working, though unsearchable, is yet so much to be trusted. And then, to confirm and crown our gladness for the whole day, and for all our days, there must be—

IX. *A determination that our own work shall be in harmony with his.* Joy could not spring from a surer source, or from one more inexhaustible, than from the consciousness that our work is God's work,—that it is he inspiring us in all our motives, aims, and methods; working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,—so that we, knowing this, and hence doing the

work in trembling and fearfulness may yet reflect somewhat of his own bright image, and be "glad also, with exceeding joy." "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands do thou establish it." (Ps. xc. 17.)

And finally—

X. *A persuasion that the time for our working in this world must be soon ended.* How suddenly we cannot tell. But never is the end far off. Our life is like yesterday when it is past,—like a watch in the night,—like a flood,—like a sleep,—like the grass which the morning sun shines on, but in the evening it is cut down and withereth.

Such our life is, because of "our secret sins,"—not hid from God. But oh, how different when these are cleansed in the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness!"

Reader, have you sought God's mercy in Christ Jesus? If not, you need to hasten. The night cometh. And there may be nothing left but this, mingled with the Saviour's tears,—“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

What remains to be done for ourselves and others, let it be done without delay, and with all our might—God helping us! So may we “rejoice and be glad all our days.” (Eccles. ix. 10.)

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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HE WOULD DIE AS HE HAD LIVED.



See page 4.

"HE would die as he had lived." Yes, these were his words, and very terrible they sounded to his daughter Margaret, who had been called suddenly from a visit she was paying to some friends, to come and nurse her dying father, in a homely lodging, where for some weeks he had "camped out," as he called it, to be within reach of good fishing.

The doctor had that day declared that Mr. Greenbank's life might be limited to only a few hours: Margaret had besought her father, with all the passion and fervour of a loving-hearted daughter, "to see a clergyman." And this had been the answer: "No, no, no," was the answer which was the more terrible as the sick man had muttered to himself, by way of

finishing his sentence, in an awed whisper—"an atheist—an atheist."

Margaret's nerves were unstrung. When her patient slept, she hastily sought her own room, and broke down completely.

The landlady heard the sound of weeping, and, with a gentle knock, announced her coming into Miss Greenbank's presence.

"There, dear young lady, you really must not give way any more," she said, in soothing tones; "you know your father is in great suffering, and when God sees fit to take him it will be only to remove him to a better world."

Margaret looked up into Mrs. Dashwood's kind motherly face, as she said pathetically—

"But oh! that's the pity of it all: father believes in no God: denies the existence of another world."

"You know while there's life there's hope, Miss! Try and look on the bright side. Our Rector is a plain-spoken man—a beautiful preacher"—

"No use, no use," interrupted Margaret; "he vows he will not see a clergyman; and it would make him more ill if I forced the matter upon him."

Half an hour later Mrs. Dashwood came and said, "My husband and I have a beautiful plan. We know a lady who holds meetings of her own on Sundays, and visits the sick in the week-days—we feel sure she would come if you asked her; and you see she's no clergyman, and she could call. May I ask her to come?"

"Yes, if you like," said Margaret. "Do not think me ungrateful," she added, "but I have no heart to hope. Father seems so fixed in his views."

"You know with God all things are possible," replied Mrs. Dashwood softly.

It was a bright June morning when Mrs. Eyre, in answer to Mrs. Dashwood's appeal, called upon Mr.

Greenbank. She had, at an early hour, when acknowledging God in all her plans and purposes of the day, pleaded for wisdom and special direction, and she had found an answer in walking round the garden after breakfast, when the thought had arisen in her mind, "Why not take some of God's own beautiful roses to the dying man? they will give their own message."

Hence it happened that Mrs. Eyre arrived about ten o'clock at Mrs. Dashwood's house, carrying a very lovely bunch of early summer roses.

Margaret Greenbank met her at the door.

"How kind of you to come; I am so grateful," she exclaimed. "Please come in, and—I will tell father, may I?"—

"Do not do more than introduce me, please," said Mrs. Eyre, smiling. Mrs. Dashwood has explained everything to me. Let me come in, and please leave me with your patient. I come in the name of my Master, and he will give me words to say!"

They then entered the invalid's room. He lay very still and outwardly calm. A better night had somewhat renewed his strength for the new day.

"Father, a lady has come to see you," said Margaret, with a palpitating heart; "see how kind she is to bring us these lovely flowers."

While Mr. Greenbank was looking from Mrs. Eyre to the flowers she held, and then from the flowers back to Mrs. Eyre's face, in questioning astonishment, Margaret gently glided from the room. Then Mrs. Eyre approached the sick man, and, placing the roses beside him, said in hushed tones—

"The God who made these has sent them to you to tell the message of his love."

"I tell you," said the sick man angrily, "I do not believe in a God."

"That makes no difference, my dear sir," said Mrs. Eyre gently. "That makes no difference to the *fact* of his existence, nor to the *fact* that he loves you!"

"Let me alone—do not disturb me," he cried. "I want to die as I have lived."

"And *He*," said Mrs. Eyre tenderly, "willeth not that *any* should perish. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

Once more the sick man said, and this time with panting breath—

"I tell you I do not believe in a God, and I will die in the faith in which I've lived!"

Mrs. Eyre rested her hand upon his, and, bending over him, looking fixedly the while into his eyes, said, "Come now, be honest about it. Are you *quite* happy without him? Are you content now, when face to face with death, to *pretend* you desire above all things to believe now, at this moment, there is no God?"

His eyes fell, and his lips quivered.

"Look," said Mrs. Eyre, turning for a brief moment to the window, "look at the glorious sunshine which is literally flooding the room in which we are. Supposing you thought well to tell me that you did not believe there was any sun, that the light and warmth which I am bathed in as I stand here are all a myth, would it alter the *fact* of there being the sun? Surely not. Ah! because *you* deny the existence of a God, are you going to make me believe, as I stand bathed within the light and warmth of his love, that there is no God? No, no, my dear sir. I *know* whom I have believed; and you shall know too, if only you will listen. 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart.'"

Two big tear-drops stood upon Mr. Greenbank's cheeks. He made no

answer, so Mrs. Eyre continued, with a beating heart,—“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

"Yes, yes," interrupted the sick man, "my own heart says I have been a great sinner—these innocent, fragrant flowers are telling me so—won't you please remove them? I am too wicked to have them near me!"

"No, no," said Mrs. Eyre—oh! how she thanked God in her heart and took courage—"these flowers are telling you a little bit of God's love. While sin is very grievous to God, and he *hates* it, he loves the sinner, oh! so tenderly. 'Why will ye die?' he asks. 'Look unto me and be saved,' he says. Think what he has done for us—'He gave his only-begotten Son.' Yes! '*He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!*' It is he—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—who says, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'"

Mrs. Eyre knelt and prayed audibly that the Holy Spirit would take of the things of God and reveal them unto the sick and weary-souled man. Then she left—left him in tears, simply saying as she pressed his hand, "The flowers will speak all day to you with their sweet perfume; they will say, 'God is love, God is love.' Believe *that*, and all else will come right!"

As Mrs. Eyre left the room, Margaret hurried into it. She had been praying earnestly that "salvation might come that day to this home," and now she hastened to her father's side, sure that she could tell at the first glance whether he was angry or otherwise.

"Father, you did not mind?" she began.

"Ask her to come again," he said, waving his hand, and then he pressed

the flowers to his lips, and Margaret had hope.

When Mrs. Eyre entered the sick man's room the following day, she was welcomed by a warm smile, and the words—

"They have preached their sermon well—the flowers; the room grew very fragrant with them as they stood in this vase at my side, and for hours and hours in the night these words *would* come—'God is love, God is love.' Yes; I believe there must be—there *is* a God; and he *can* fill this aching, hungry void my heart has always known, even at times when I tried to feel happy in the faith of an infidel."

Much to the doctor's surprise, Mr. Greenbank rallied. He was able to sit up in his room. Mrs. Eyre saw him almost daily. It was her joy to give him a large-typed Bible, which he studied with "hungry appetite."

One day he said, during a conversation with her—"Were I permitted to get quite strong and live for years, I never could expect to find the same joy in the Christian faith that you and others can. I have lived for sixty-eight years without God and without hope in the world. I believe to my soul's salvation in the merits of a crucified Saviour, and my heart is full of humble adoration and of joy; but I have no tender memories of years devoted to his service, no blessed experience of having claimed his promises one by one to enrich my own life in being a messenger of mercy to others, as you were to me."

One day—the summer was at its height—Mrs. Eyre went to pay her accustomed visit to Mr. Greenbank. "Come in, come in," he said in reverent tones. "See what I have done!"

He pointed to a pile of letters which stood already stamped for post upon the sitting-room table.

"It has been such a joy to me," he said; "and oh! so good of God to permit it. I have been writing to each of my near relatives and friends, to tell them that he who once professed to be an atheist, gloried in his creed, and *lived* as though it must be true, had come a poor penitent sinner to the Cross of the Crucified Lamb, and was looking to the God of love for salvation through the merits of Christ's blood!" Mr. Greenbank's face looked brilliant. Mrs. Eyre wept silently, and in her heart there was a hymn of thanksgiving.

Mr. Greenbank did not long survive this interview. His frail form gave way, and he calmly sank, as a tired babe at the close of a happy day. He sank to sleep, only to wake in the presence of the God in whom he had so recently believed.

This narrative has its deep teaching. There are many who even under the name of Christian say in their hearts, "There is no God." Let all pause and reflect on what they have been reading; and may God in his infinite grace have mercy on all, and bring them to the saving knowledge of himself, and of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

MRS. G. S. REANEY. Reprinted by permission.

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JAMES GILMOUR OF MONGOLIA.



THE Mongols and Chinese were used to speak of him who is the subject of this sketch as "Our Gilmour." They knew he was their friend. He lived amongst them as one of themselves—dressing, eating, and drinking as they did. His life was the best part of his message. He put the

gospel into it. He *lived* the gospel—so that in his own person he gave the heathen people some idea of the love and sacrifice of Christ.

Far longer, and to a far larger extent, than will ever be known, his memory, no doubt, will be cherished in those heathen places, as the

stranger who came in Christ's name to be a blessing to them.

James Gilmour was born at Cathkin, not far from Glasgow, on June 12, 1843. His mother used to say to her children, as they pored over the *Juvenile Missionary Magazines*, "Wouldn't it be fine if some of you, when you grow up, should be able to write such nice little stories as these for children, and do some good in the world in that way?" It was her wish, no doubt also her secret prayer, and it has come to pass in a way far beyond what she could have any idea of.

Gilmour proved himself a good scholar at the High School, and then at the University of Glasgow, where he gained high honours.

His conversion took place during his student life; and here again one of his mother's expressions would seem to have been greatly blessed. Her efficient and well-remembered words were these, often spoken to her children: "What an unco thing it will be if I see you shut out of heaven!" A simple word, but it was the seed of the kingdom.

Once his heart was fixed on Christ, he resolved to devote himself to the ministry, and, whilst studying at the Divinity Hall in Edinburgh with this in view, the great missionary scheme of his life was suggested to him.

After preparatory studies at Cheshunt College and Highbury Mission House, London, Gilmour was ordained as a missionary to Mongolia, in Augustine Chapel, Edinburgh, on Feb. 10, 1870, and on the 22nd of the same month sailed from Liverpool.

He was leaving all, and going alone. Sometimes the thought of this would well-nigh overwhelm him, brave and resolute though he was,—until the thought of Christ came, with the promise, "I am with you, even to the end of the world." He says of that time: "I have felt the blessedness of this promise rushing

over me repeatedly when I knelt down and spoke to Jesus as a present companion, from whom I am sure to find sympathy."

On May 18, 1870, he reached the Chinese capital, and shortly after started on his first mission to Mongolia, a vast and almost unknown region lying between China proper and Siberia. He knew not the language, but gradually acquired it by mixing with the wandering tribes in their tent-life, and enduring more and greater hardships than can well be described.

There never was a Christian more true and simple-hearted. When his life was threatened, and in midst of dangers of all kinds, it seems hardly to have occurred to him that there was anything to be afraid of; and when under the keenest sufferings, by cold out on the frozen plains, or shelterless beneath the burning sun, no thought of complaint would seem to have crossed his mind. He was in God's hand. He was Christ's servant. It was all done and endured gladly for that good Master who had suffered so much for him.

Repeatedly he set out from Peking on these missionary expeditions, being absent sometimes for long periods, and lost almost to civilised society. One thing that distinguished him remarkably was his absolute trust in God's providence. He used to remark how he had been led to do the things he had least liking for. On leaving home for the mission field, he expected and wished to settle down quietly in one place; but God appointed him to be a life-long wanderer, having no rest for the sole of his foot, and meeting trouble at every step.

Not used to riding, he yet had to mount his horse and ride for a month over six hundred miles of unsafe desert. He loved retirement, but could not get it, day or night, in midst of the half-savage people

to whom he gave himself for the gospel's sake. By instinct and education he was a scholar; but the work assigned him was to teach illiterate Chinamen and Mongols, heal their sores, and present Christ to them.

His heart was set on seeing fruit from his labours; but a long time passed before he found one who even *wanted* to be a Christian. Once he and his wife prayed night and day for success in their treatment of a case of cataract of the eyes; but the patient became *stone-blind*; and for a while their own lives were in great jeopardy by the infuriated mob on account of this failure.

As the result of eight months' toil and hardship, he puts down the following:—Patients seen, (about) 5717; hearers preached to, 23,755; books sold, 3067; tracts distributed, 4500; miles travelled, 1860; money spent, £30 to £40. Yet out of all this there were (as he declared) only two men who had openly confessed Christ. How trying it must have been to Gilmour, who was so eager to win souls for Christ, and who says his fault is impatience—a dislike to be kept waiting!

He took it all, however, as wholesome discipline, and he tells us how he crept nearer to God by the trials he endured: "Just the other day, Jesus, so to speak, put out his hand and touched me as I was reading a hymn, something about desiring spiritual things and passing by Jesus himself. I wanted his blessing more than I wanted him. That is not right.

"Lately, too, I have become calm. Before, I worked, oh! so hard and so much, and asked God to bless my work. Now I try to pray more; this is the better way. It is the right way. And I work a lot even now; perhaps as much as before; but I don't worry at the things I

cannot overtake. I feel, too, more than I did, that God is guiding me. Oh! sometimes the peace of God flows over me like a river."

Writing to his father, he says: "To-night I have a pillow" (he had been three weeks without one). "Christ had not where to lay his head. In all things I am still better off than he was."

It is beautiful to hear how this sore-tried heroic man speaks of his divine refuge and strength: "In my mission work out here I am much thrown upon God. The field is a very hard one. The superstitions are like towns walled up to heaven. The power of man avails nothing against them. As far as man is concerned I am almost alone. I turn to God. I hear the words, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.' I trust him. I call upon him. I commune with him. He comes near me. I ask him to convert men. There are conversions, a few true, as far as I can judge."

His faith in God was displayed very remarkably in his choosing of a wife. He had never met Miss Prankard; had only heard of her, and seen her portrait; nor had she ever met or seen him. But on both sides there was faith in the good guiding of God; and the first letters that passed between them were, on his part, a proposal, and on hers, an acceptance.

It proved a most happy marriage. In his journeyings she accompanied him, exposed to cold and heat, floods and furious tempests, and those other trials, even more severe, occasioned by the suspicions and intrusions of the rude people amongst whom they lived. Not less resolution had she than Gilmour expresses for himself in one of his official reports: "Man, the fire of God is upon me to go and preach!"

He twice made a short return to

England, in 1882, and in 1889; publishing on the former occasion his book entitled *Among the Mongols*,—a book with so much charm in it that it has been well described as another *Robinson Crusoe*. "That's it," says one of the critics, who for a while felt puzzled to know where or how he had been so much fascinated before. "That's it—Robinson Crusoe has turned missionary, lived years in Mongolia, and written a book about it!"

Just after midnight on September 18, 1885, Mrs. Gilmour died at Pekin, after lingering illness. A day or two before, she said, "Well, Jamie, I am going, I suppose. I'll soon see you there. It won't be long. I think I'll sit at the gate and look for you coming."

This loss was a sore trial to the lonely missionary. But he bore it with calm fortitude. He was not denied the comfort wherewith he could comfort others. His mother had died the year before, and he writes thus to console his aged father:—

"You are eighty years old. I am proud of you. I like to think of your life. Mother told me, when I was a lad, of some of your early struggles. God has been with you and guided you on through all to a good old age of honour and love.

"Depend upon it, God has something better for us in the world to come than he has ever given us here. And it is not difficult to get it. God wants to give it to us all; offers it to us, and is distressed if we don't take it. We have only to

go to Christ and ask Jesus to make it all right for us, and he'll do it. Only let him arrange all things for you as regards your soul, and he'll do it all right. He can be trusted. Heaven is not far away; we'll soon be there; comfort your heart.

"This is no dream; it is real; it is true; it is kept for us; it will be ours. We'll see it soon; you and I will be there together. It may be some time before we are there together; but years soon pass. Cheer up, my father!"

Again, in the capacity of a father himself, he writes to his two boys in England:—"Cheer up, my dear sonnies! We shall see each other some day yet. Tell all your troubles to Jesus, and let him be your friend. Sometimes, when I am writing a letter to you, and come to the foot of a page, and want to turn over the leaf, I don't take blotting paper and blot it, but kneel down and pray while it is drying."

In his hours of deep need Gilmour found inexhaustible refreshment in the Bible, in the Book of Psalms especially. He said it fitted the soul as well as a Chubb's key fits the lock it was made for. How true that is!

He died of fever in Tientsin, after brief illness, on May 21, 1891. Grown-up men burst into tears and sobbed like children when they were told he was dead. It will be long before "Our Gilmour" is forgotten in those regions where he walked so long and so closely in the footsteps of his great Master.

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WHAT IS FAITH?

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.



See page 4.

WHAT is this faith concerning which it is said, "By grace are ye saved *through faith*"? Faith is the simplest of all things, and perhaps because of its simplicity it is the more difficult to explain.

My answer to the question is: *Faith is made up of three things—knowledge, belief, and trust.*

Knowledge comes first. "How

shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" I want to be informed of a fact before I can possibly believe it. "Faith cometh by hearing:" we must first hear, in order that we may know what is to be believed. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." A measure of knowledge is essential to faith: hence the importance of

getting knowledge. Search the Scriptures, and learn what the Holy Spirit teacheth concerning Christ and his salvation. Seek to know God: "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Know the gospel: know what the good news is, how it talks of free forgiveness, and of change of heart, of adoption into the family of God, and of countless other blessings. Know especially Christ Jesus the Son of God, the Saviour of men, united to us by his human nature, and yet one with God; and thus able to act as mediator between God and man. Endeavour especially to know the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ; for the point upon which saving faith mainly fixes itself is this: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Know that Jesus was "made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Drink deep into the doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ; for therein lies the sweetest possible comfort to the guilty sons of men, since the Lord "made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Faith begins with knowledge.

The mind goes on to *believe* that these things are true. The soul believes that God is, and that he hears the cries of sincere hearts; that the gospel is from God; that justification by faith is the grand truth which God hath revealed in these last days by his Spirit more clearly than before. Then the heart believes that Jesus is verily and in truth our God and Saviour, the Redeemer of men, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. All this is accepted as sure truth, not to be called in question. I pray that you may at once come to this.

Get firmly to believe that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" that his sacrifice is complete and fully accepted of God on man's behalf, so that he that believeth on Jesus is not condemned. Believe the witness of God just as you believe the testimony of your own father or friend. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."

So far you have made an advance towards faith; only one more ingredient is needed to complete it, which is *trust*. Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious gospel; trust your soul on the dying and living Saviour; wash away your sins in the atoning blood; accept his perfect righteousness, and all is well. Trust is the life-blood of faith: there is no saving faith without it. The Puritans were accustomed to explain faith by the word "recumbency." It means leaning upon a thing. Lean with all your weight upon Christ. It would be a better illustration still if I said, Fall at full length, and lie on the Rock of Ages. Cast yourself upon Jesus; rest in him; commit yourself to him. That done, you have exercised saving faith. Faith is not a blind thing; for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation. That is one way of describing what faith is.

Let me try again. *Faith is believing that Christ is what he is said to be, and that he will do what he has promised to do, and then to expect this of him.*

The Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ as being God, God in human flesh; as being perfect in his character; as being made a sin-offering on our behalf; as bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. The Scrip-

ture speaks of him as having finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. The sacred records further tell us that he "rose again from the dead," that he "ever liveth to make intercession for us," that he has gone up into the glory, and has taken possession of heaven on the behalf of his people, and that he will shortly come again "to judge the world in righteousness, and his people with equity." We are most firmly to believe that it is even so; for this is the testimony of God the Father when he said, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." This also is testified by God the Holy Spirit; for the Spirit has borne witness to Christ, both in the inspired word and by divers miracles, and by his working in the hearts of men. We are to believe this testimony to be true.

Faith also believes that Christ will do what he has promised; that since he has promised to cast out none that come to him, it is certain that he will not cast *us* out if we come to him. Faith believes that since Jesus said, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," it must be true; and if *we* get this living water from Christ, it will abide in *us*, and will well up within *us* in streams of holy life. Whatever Christ has promised to do he will do; and we must believe this, so as to look for pardon, justification, preservation, and eternal glory from his hand, according as he has promised them to believers in him.

Then comes the next necessary step. Jesus is what he is said to be, Jesus will do what he says he will do; therefore we must each one *trust him*, saying, "He will be to me what he says he is, and he will do to me what he has promised to do; I leave myself in the hands

of Him who is appointed to save, that he may save me. I rest upon his promise that he will do even as he has said." This is a saving faith, and he that hath it hath everlasting life. Whatever his dangers and difficulties, whatever his darkness and depression, whatever his infirmities and sins, he that believeth thus on Christ Jesus is not condemned, and shall never come into condemnation.

To make the matter of faith clearer still, I will give you a few illustrations.

The faith which saves has its analogies in the human frame.

It is *the eye* which looks. By the eye we bring into the mind that which is far away; we can bring the sun and the far-off stars into the mind by a glance of the eye. So by trust we bring the Lord Jesus near to us; and though he be far away in heaven, he enters into our heart. Only look to Jesus.

Faith is *the hand* which grasps. When our hand takes hold of anything for itself, it does precisely what faith does when it appropriates Christ and the blessings of his redemption. Faith says, "Jesus is mine." Faith hears of the pardoning blood, and cries, "I accept it to pardon *me*." Faith calls the legacies of the dying Jesus her own; and they are her own, for faith is Christ's heir; he has given himself and all that he has to faith. Take, O friend, that which grace has provided for thee.

Faith is *the mouth* which feeds upon Christ. Before food can nourish us, it must be received into us. This is a simple matter—this eating and drinking. We willingly receive into the mouth that which is our food, and then we consent that it should pass down into our inward parts, wherein it is taken up and absorbed into our bodily frame. Paul says, in his Epistle to the

Romans, in the tenth chapter, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth." Now then, all that is to be done is to swallow it, to suffer it to go down into the soul. Oh that men had an appetite! for he who is hungry and sees meat before him does not need to be taught how to eat. Truly, a heart which hungers and thirsts after Christ has but to know that he is freely given, and at once it will receive him.

Faith exists in different persons in various degrees, according to the amount of their knowledge or growth in grace. Sometimes faith is little more than a simple *clinging* to Christ; a sense of dependence and a willingness so to depend. It is the limpet's life to cling to the rock, and it is the sinner's life to cling to Jesus. Thousands of God's people have no more faith than this; they know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and soul, and this suffices for present peace and eternal safety. Reader, cannot you cling? Do so at once.

Faith is seen when one man relies upon another from a knowledge of the superiority of that other. This is a higher faith; the faith which knows the reason for its dependence, and acts upon it. A blind man trusts himself with his guide because he knows that his friend can see, and, trusting, he walks where his guide conducts him. This is as good an image of faith as well can be; we know that Jesus has about him merit, and power, and blessing, which we do not possess, and therefore we gladly trust ourselves to him

to be to us what we cannot be to ourselves. We trust him as the blind man trusts his guide. He never betrays our confidence.

Another and a higher form of faith is that faith which *grows out of love*. Why does a boy trust his father? The reason why the child trusts his father is because he loves him. The lovers of Jesus are charmed with his character, and delighted with his mission, they are carried away by the loving-kindness that he has manifested, and therefore they cannot help trusting him, because they so much admire, revere, and love him.

A notable form of *faith arises out of assured knowledge*: this comes of growth in grace, and is the faith which believes Christ because it knows him, and trusts him because it has proved him to be infallibly faithful. An old Christian was in the habit of writing "T. and P." in the margin of her Bible whenever she had tried and proved a promise. How easy it is to trust a tried and proved Saviour! You cannot do this as yet, but you will do so. Everything must have a beginning. You will rise to strong faith in due time. This matured faith asks not for signs and tokens, but bravely believes.

Will not my reader put his trust in God in Christ Jesus? There I rest with joyous confidence. Brother, come with me, and believe our Father and our Saviour. Come at once.

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LEVI THE PUBLICAN.



JESUS had just had brought to him a paralytic to be cured, and had given more than was asked for by also rescuing the *sinner* from his sins, (Luke v. 20;) reminding us that if the sin be removed, there is removal of the root of all ill-health and unhappiness.

Still more clear is it that Jesus is the sinner's friend, by his dealings with Levi the publican. This man's

business was to collect a hated tax from his countrymen, a business none would engage in who had any reputation to lose. It was conducted on the farming principle, and the rule was to exact as much as possible by fair means or by foul. Levi, sitting at his business, would be, in public estimation, the picture of an outcast sinner, whom every respect-

able person would be careful to avoid, and doubtless the more so because his name was one of the old honoured names in Israel.

Instead of avoiding this man, Jesus went straight up to him, and asked him to be one of his followers. But it would seem as though, even before a word was spoken, Jesus had made conquest of the man's heart. When it is said that he "saw" or "beheld" Levi, it means that he stood and fixed his eyes on him. Sinner and Saviour met in the glance of each other's eyes, and there was a subduing, captivating power in the one which the other could not resist.

God says in the Old Testament, "I will guide thee with mine eye." In Jesus, the Son of God, that power was not absent, as the Apostle Peter had reason to know, when he stood shame-stricken in the high priest's hall. From no eye ever darted, with so much effect, the arrows of conviction—from none ever flowed, with so potent a charm, the genial beams of sympathy.

Nor may we suppose the power is absent from Jesus now, in his glorified state. After he had risen, it seems to have been, for a time at least, and in some degree, delegated to his disciples, who in his name, and when "filled with the Holy Ghost," wrought wonders. Peter and John, at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, fastened their eyes on the poor cripple, and asked him to do the same, "Look on us." The effect was marvellous.

We read also that Paul, being "filled with the Holy Ghost," fastened his eyes on Elymas the sorcerer, at the moment when that deceitful man was stricken with blindness; as Zaccheus the publican was stricken, in a different way, when Jesus lifted up his eyes to him.

Not as a matter of sight, but of faith, we may be assured the glorified

Saviour is still there to fix his gaze on us; and if we live as though beneath his loving and searching eyes, what a healing influence there must come upon our whole nature day by day from this benignant source,—just as the flowers prosper and are in health when washed with the dews of heaven, with the fresh air and sunlight!

Observe in what manner Jesus gives the call to Levi. He simply takes the man as he finds him, covered with reproach, with all his shame and worthlessness upon him,—asks for no explanation, or extenuation of anything that may be wrong in him, but takes him just as he is, and says to him, "I want you to be my servant: follow me." "And he left all, rose up, and followed him."

The call and the response were made apparently on the instant,—no hesitation on either side; no delay, but in both a remarkable directness, and simplicity, and promptitude. So it is with the gospel call, and the acceptance it should receive from us. On the Saviour's part, "Come, just as you are." On the sinner's part, "Here am I, Lord."

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

And the whole matter is settled. Thus it is the Father of love transacts business with our souls, through his Son Jesus Christ.

But there is a contrast worth noticing. Not in this way is the matter settled when a fresh servant is engaged by the mistress of the household, or by the employer of labour. Woe to the man or woman who has no certificates of character to produce, or who cannot stand the test of "inquiries!"

We sinners have our own way of dealing with one another; and God has his, mercifully so different, in

dealing with all of us. Our fault lies in supposing that no other than our own way is possible in present circumstances. Had that been true, Jesus would not have taken Levi to himself so rashly. He would have paused and asked himself, "Can I trust this outcast, or no? If I take him, will not his evil reputation taint my own?"

Oh, what difference, when the Father's love is introduced, instead of the mere employer's hope of gain-getting,—the love that seeketh not her own, and is so eager always to bestow a benefit! There is no catechising on Jesus' part; no halting suspicion on the publican's. The Master does not ask what fitness he has; and the poor man seems not to have a thought that any fitness is needed.

Many hear Christ's call, to come and follow him, or to sit down at his table with him, who yet hesitate to obey, because they have not—what he never asks—fitness to come with. They wait until they can come pleased with their own repentance, until they see it to be large enough,—not considering that penitence, the larger it is in reality, grows less in its own estimation. The deepest penitence must ever be the least self-satisfied.

The only thing Christ asks is obedience; and we may judge, from Levi's case, that the will to obey will always draw from the Master himself the strength for the obedience.

Levi's character was no doubt greatly changed after he gave himself to Christ. In his own Gospel, (Matthew's,) written many years afterwards, in giving a list of the apostles' names, he does not mention the occupation and social standing of any save one, and that one is characterised as "*Matthew the publican.*" He was not ashamed to call attention to the depth from

which the Saviour's love had lifted him.

Again, when he tells us how Jesus came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s, he puts it in connection with the fact that Jesus called *him*. In his humble-mindedness, when referring to the great feast made in honour of Christ, he does not mention, (leaving it to others, if they chose, to say,) that it was specially provided by himself, that it took place in his own house, and that it was furnished with very great munificence.

Then, as to the sacrifice involved in his prompt obedience when Christ said, "Follow me," he omits to mention it. Others tell us he "left all," and it must have been no small loss to do so; but he himself would seem to have judged the hardship "nothing," not worth speaking of.

To follow Christ implies a change of *principle* at heart, and does not necessarily involve such business-change as the outward eye can see. But if there be conflict between the divine word and the occupation, Levi's case may help to solve the difficulty. No inquiries or calculations on his part were made, as to how his business-loss was to be made up; or if it was ever to be made up at all. It was *right* to obey Christ, and the question of its *profitableness* does not seem to have in the least disturbed him.

To us also, as clearly, the call may come to do, or endure, things painful and, (in a worldly sense,) unprofitable. Not strange if Christ, who has often laid it upon some of his best friends to suffer cruel torments and shameful deaths, should ask us to endure wrongs and sore injuries without complaint,—to use up health and wealth, ungrudgingly, for no profit or pleasure of our own,—and in the same spirit to meet many of life's adversities or unrewarded toils.

But if one should ask, How do I know *what* Christ's call is *for me*? the answer is, There is no earthly

authority whom you can surely trust to tell you, to give you the specific information; but you can get it in another way—the knowledge will assuredly be given if you hold yourself in readiness to obey it. This spirit of obedience is the one condition of being well taught and well guided in all things. “If any man *will* do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” (John vii. 17.)

Levi invited many “sinners” to meet Jesus at the feast. It was wisely planned. It was putting the leaven where it was most needed, and doing this in the most favourable circumstances—at table. You will not easily gain a friend, or win back an enemy, unless you eat with him. If you have a refractory child, your admonition will more readily touch his heart if it be administered with his food, when he is hungry, and when you sit in fellowship with him at the family board. Perhaps this idea entered into the old-fashioned hospitality, as in Abraham’s case when he entertained the angels unawares.

This was illustrated many times in Christ’s life. On the eve of his death, he sealed fellowship with his brethren by a perpetual symbolic ordinance of eating and drinking; and after his resurrection, the main thing that renewed the interrupted fellowship seems to have been partaking in each other’s society, the ordinary creature comforts of life.

When Jesus, on this occasion of Levi’s feast, was blamed for mixing with reprobate people, his answer

was, that he came as the great Physician, to the sin-sick world,—to men’s bad characters,—to men’s diseased and dying souls. It was as though he had said to the objectors, God at one time gave you the command not to eat with sinners, lest they should do you harm,—I am come to show, it is fit time *now* to eat with sinners, *in order to do them good*. “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

Reader, Jesus comes to you, as he came to Levi, to meet your *need*, not your deservingness. It is a mission of love,—like a mother’s love, whose service is bestowed most anxiously on the child that stands in deepest need of it.

In like manner does the heart of Jesus, the heart of God, yearn over us all. Our very sins, and their very worst aggravations, instead of checking our hope, if we plead for pardon, may well yield us the greater encouragement. Through Christ we may indeed “come boldly unto the throne of grace.” (Heb. iv. 16.)

Some religions would warn you not to go to God if you feel yourself to be very bad;—contrast with this the beauty, the mercy, the tender pity of the true religion, as it comes through Jesus Christ, from the great Father of love, to assure you that in the last stage of your iniquity you are the more welcome to the throne of the heavenly grace, and least likely to be sent unblessed away. (John vi. 37.)

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KNOWING ABOUT IT, YET NOT KNOWING IT.



WILLIAM COCHRANE was an amiable and intelligent young man, resident in Kilmarnock. He partly understood his duties to his fellow-men, and sought to discharge them; but he had no room in his heart for God, and no true sense of obligation to him. Indeed, like every unconverted man, the amiable as well as the profane, he lived very much as he would have done had he

been assured there was no God, no Saviour, no judgment, and no eternity.

He went to church; but if this be all, a man may as easily forget God amid the round of religious observances, as in the entire neglect of them. Happily for William, however, God met him there, and used the preached word for the thorough awakening of his slumbering soul. The Holy

Spirit convinced him of his unutterable guilt before God ; that it was of sinners like him that such words were spoken, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17). For ten months he had found no rest. All this time he was making vehement efforts to get his heart put right, but the more he strove to make it right, the more conscious he became of its being hopelessly wrong. For some months he had been feeling as if he were within a hairbreadth of salvation. But he missed that salvation, for, not knowing that the word was so near him (Rom. x. 8), he persisted in seeking it just a hairbreadth off.

It was while he was in this state of mind that the writer met him, and, after praying, a conversation like the following ensued :—

"Now, William, we have met to speak about the gospel ; but whether will you tell me about it, or am I to tell you ? for really you seem to know all about it."

He made no answer, but his look was full of despairing misery.

"Do you think you know enough, William, of the story of divine love, to be able to point out the way of salvation to an anxious soul, if no one else were at hand to do it ?"

"Yes," said he, with deliberation ; "I think I could."

"And what would you tell him ?"

"I would show him what Jesus had done to save the lost, and I would tell him that there was pardon for any sinner through the blood of Jesus."

"And if he were to ask you *how* he was to get this forgiveness, and *when*, what would you answer ?"

"Oh," said he, "I would say that he was to believe on the Lord Jesus, and to believe *at once*, that he might be at once forgiven."

"Now, William, how much comfort doestheknowledgeofallthese precious truths give yourself ?" I asked.

"Oh, they give me no comfort at all."

"That is surely very strange ; what can be the matter ?"

"I do not know," he answered very modestly.

"Ah, William, here's the reason," said I. "Though you know a great deal *about* the gospel, you don't believe it ; you don't believe what you told me a minute ago."

"Oh, certainly," said he, with earnestness ; "I do believe it."

"Then what makes you so unhappy ?" I asked.

"It's the hardness of my heart," he said. "I have no pleasure in prayer or in the Bible ; and as for God, I am afraid of him, and I don't feel that I love him."

"Then would it make you happy if you could feel your heart soft and tender, melting at the remembrance of your sins, and warming with love at the thought of Jesus."

"That's the very thing that I'm wanting," he said eagerly ; "but, do as I like, I cannot get at it."

"Ah, my friend, you will never get your rest there. Will you tell me once more, who it is that Jesus came to seek and to save ?" I asked.

"He came to save sinners."

"Are you quite sure of that ?"

"Oh yes," said he, "the Bible says so very plainly : 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

"Now, William," said I, "this is just the point which you do not believe."

"Oh yes," said he ; "I certainly believe that."

"I don't think you do, for if you did, you would not be in despair *because you are a sinner*. What is a sinner, but just a poor wicked creature exactly like yourself, with a hard, godless heart, just like yours ? It was to save *such sinners* that Jesus came, and if you were anything but what you are, you would not be a fit subject for Christ's mercy, for he came to save the lost. Why, then, are you seeking to work some good thing in yourself, instead of going to Jesus

just as you are, to take, in your character as a sinner, the free mercy which all along he has been holding out to you AS A SINNER?"

"That's just what I'm wishing to do," he said briskly.

"Nay, William," said I, "that is what you are most unwilling to do. The truth is, you will not venture yourself into God's hands *with no plea whatever* save the blood of Jesus, and God's own promise about it. You want to have, in addition, some good feelings of your own."

He was very thoughtful for a little, and then quietly asked, "What do you think I should do now?"

"I think you should give up trying to do any more in the sense you mean it. All your doing hitherto has done nothing for you, and it never will. Be quiet now, and simply listen to God. Will you read Rom. x. 1-3?"

He read: "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*"

"Now, William," said I, "you see from these verses that the Jews were very like you. They sought what you are seeking, and they sought it earnestly; but because they did not seek in God's way, they missed it. Is there anything in the third verse that strikes you?"

"Yes," he said; "*Going about to establish their own righteousness.*"

"And what strikes you in that?"

"I fear that I have been doing it."

"Indeed you have, William. Now, what does the verse say about those who go about to establish their own righteousness?"

"They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

"Precisely so," I replied; "and is not this your case? You want to be

saved as a good man, instead of 'submitting' gladly to be saved as a bad man; as one who, having no goodness of his own, needs to be indebted to the mere mercy of his Saviour. It is not your sins that hinder you from getting peace; it is your unwillingness to be SAVED AS A SINNER. Will you please to read also Exodus xii. from the first to the fourteenth verse?" He did so, and was so well instructed as quite to understand that the Passover was a type of the Lord Jesus, and of free salvation in his blood.

"Now, William," said I, "if guilty Egypt suffer for its sins, why should guilty Israel escape? They escape only because they have God's assurance that wherever the blood-marks shall be put upon the door, there the destroying angel will 'pass over.' Now, notice particularly the words, verse 13: '*When I see the blood, I will pass over you;*' and from these words learn three most important lessons:—

"First, the thing which saved an Israelite was not anything in his own heart. He might feel his heart soft, or he might feel it hard; his safety did not depend on the state of his feelings, but simply on the fact of his having put up the blood-marks on his door. The one thing that could give him safety was something *outside of himself*; nay, it was outside of his house; it was the blood on the door-posts. And, in like manner, the only thing which can preserve a sinner now from God's judgment against sin is the blood of Jesus; which blood is something not in our hearts at all—not in our houses even—not in this town—not in Scotland. And yet, dear William, you keep searching in your own heart for a something of your own, which you wish God to recognise as yours, and for the sake of which you would have him to withdraw his destroying judgments! Do you see what I mean?"

"I see it very clearly," he said.

"Then please notice, second, that

the something which kept the household in safety was not only outside of themselves, but it was something which *they could not* EVEN SEE. God alone saw it: 'When I see the blood,' he says. And it is the same still. The sinner who is saved by the blood of Jesus is saved on account of something which he himself does not see, but which God sees. Now, William, you are seeking to see something, to feel something; and till you can see it for yourself, you can take no comfort from what God is telling you that he *sees*, for you refuse to believe him."

"Oh," said he eagerly, "this is the very point where I have been all wrong. I see it now."

"Then notice the third lesson. While the Israelite was saved by something outside of himself, and which he could not even see, he had God's *plain promise about it* to keep him in peace of mind, but *he had* NOTHING ELSE. You refuse to trust simply to God's bare word, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin.' But till you 'submit' to trust yourself into God's hands simply *as a sinner*, with nothing to give you safety but the blood of Jesus, and with nothing to give you peace but God's promise, and this too while you see nothing, and feel nothing,—till you 'submit' to this, there is no release from your sin and black despair. Are you not ready yet?"

"Yes, I am ready," he said, with a tremulous voice, and with the deepest feeling.

"And does this way of holy mercy suit a case so hopeless and so helpless as yours?"

"It does," he replied, "oh, it does! I never saw before that I might be saved just as I am, and just at once, but I see it plainly now."

The foregoing conversation was blessed to the young man. He went direct to the Lord Jesus, and found immediate and lasting peace. He was then in usual health, but some time after his health broke down, and in fifteen months or so he died. His end was "perfect peace."

Reader, have *you* submitted to the righteousness of God? Have you, in the light of God's holy presence, seen that all your righteousnesses are filthy rags—that your very best deeds are as perfectly worthless, so far as your justification is concerned, as those which you have counted your very worst? Have you, therefore, been brought to glory only in Christ, as made of God unto you "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"? (1 Cor. i. 30). Or are you still toiling at the heartless, hopeless, wicked task of seeking to establish your own righteousness?

Alas for you, if it be so!

But possibly, reader, you may be yet perfectly unconcerned. How can you be so easy when God's wrath at this moment rests upon you? (John iii. 36.) How can you manage to laugh—to sleep—to eat and drink—you, a lost soul, condemned already (John iii. 18), and at this moment, for aught you know, within an hour of the awful execution? O sleeper, awake! awake! There is help at your side if you will only accept of it.

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THE GREAT INVITATION.



SOMETIMES the one who speaks to us is not worthy to be heard, or the thing said, however worthy the speaker, may not in the least concern us. But it is not so with the person and the message dealt with here. It is the greatest speaker the world ever listened to, and the most hopeful utterance that ever blessed the human ear, when Jesus gives the

great Invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

1. *It is a universal call.* There is no favouritism with Jesus. No one class does he address more than another. No one type of character does he invite more than another. His appeal is—Come one, come all!

What more natural than that father and son, if true to their names, should be each other's best interpreter? "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here then is Jesus, having spoken these words, as though he had just come from the Father's bosom, turning round to the whole world, stretching out his hands, and pleading with every rational creature in it,—Come one, come all—come unto me, and I will give you rest!

2. *The call is universally needed.* There is no soul of man in this world that needs not to be unburdened. Go where you may, to rich or poor, to high or low, healthy or not healthy, there are deep cries and pleadings for relief, although the voices are, more or less, muffled voices. The air which human beings breathe is filled with moanings of unrest.

Jesus points out the true labour party when he says, "All ye that labour and are heavy laden." How very little, after all, has capital, or the want of capital, to do with it! The miseries that arise from poverty, or from excessive toil, are not the hardest.

The hardest are those which belong to all alike, which still remain when you have removed the poverty and the hard toil also;—those troubles which owe their origin to inward states of the soul, to a bad conscience, to a perverted mind, to unholy temper, to a heart out of harmony with God. What mockery wealth is, and idleness, and the whole host of worldly successes and pleasures, when brought in to give rest from these!

3. *It is personal help that is promised.* The gospel of Jesus is the offer of *himself*: Here am I, come unto me, and I will give you rest! This is his usual manner of speech. He is no mere fingerpost, to point the way,—

he *is* the Way; no mere lantern, bearing the light,—he *is* the Light; no mere teacher, to tell the truth,—he *is* the Truth; no mere guide of life,—he *is* the Life, the very Fountainhead of life itself.

An aged person, as she lay dying, yet in full possession of her mental powers, fell into a doze one afternoon, and while in this borderland between sleeping and waking imagined some one whom she did not know was near. She saw nothing; she only felt conscious of a *presence* moving very close to her, as you might move one hand over the other with a feeling of nearness, yet with no sense of actual touch.

"Who are you?" she said.

It seemed to her as though a voice replied, "I am Jehovah."

"And where do you live?" she again asked in perfect sincerity, and yet feeling as if it were almost an impertinent thing to do.

The reply came, "I dwell with all them that are of a penitent and believing heart; and I will never leave them, nor forsake them."

This reverie, or dream, had a great truth in it. It brought comfort to the dying saint. She wished she could live long enough to let the whole world know of it.

It is true Jesus saves us by the nearness of his own personality; and his presence with one poor sinner does not mean his absence from another. In *himself* lies our hope, our deliverance. And hence there is so much of the personal element in the hymns of all Christian ages—they are the breath of those who felt themselves in living touch with the Saviour.

"I've found a Friend; oh, such a Friend!

He loved me ere I knew him!

He drew me with the cords of love,

And thus he bound me to him.

And round my heart still closely twine

These ties which naught can sever;

For I am his, and he is mine,

For ever and for ever."

4. *The personal help is not promised except in response to personal exertions.*

We must cast ourselves on Christ for salvation. And this "casting" implies the forth-putting of intense energy. Jesus plainly means this when he uses the word "come." He uses it in such way as yourself would in applying it to him. If it entered into your prayers to him, when you were in distress, "Lord Jesus, come, draw near to me," you would expect that he, in giving favourable answer to your entreaty, would make some very earnest practical effort.

He expects the same of you in answer to his own entreaty, "Come unto me." You are to make effort to draw near to him. You are to be in deep earnest, as he is. You are to avoid all that would displease him. You are to be sincere, simple-hearted, unselfish, resolute, unwearied in your prayers.

There can be no true coming to Christ unless, girding up "the loins of your mind," you are determined to reach him at any sacrifice—as the racer strives to reach the goal, or the soldier to take the city-wall by storm.

On condition that you come just as you are, and in this spirit, the personal help is promised.

5. *The help is of inward and spiritual kind.* "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is not the rest of feeling that all your troubles are ended, but of feeling that you are in the hands of a good Friend who will bear you up in every trouble, and bring you safely through.

It is rest to the *conscience*, groaning beneath its guilty burden; the joy of "acceptance in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." This is the rest the soul finds, through Christ, in the divine mercy and love. But the conscience, whilst happier,

grows more keenly sensitive for being in living touch with Christ.

Such rest is it to the *mind* also, in its weary gropings after truth. If these are not ended, they are relieved by sure and blessed hope. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Job xix. 25).

So also with the *heart's* troubles, as they arise amid the changes and uncertainties of life: "I will give you rest." Robert Burns speaks a true and tender word when he says, "Little does the fond mother think, as she bends over the infant at her breast, where the poor fellow may wander, or what may be his fate." That is so, and yet, if she surrender him to Christ, how gladly may she not rest her soul in hope of a good destiny for her child at last! "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Peter v. 7).

6. *It is the fruit of entire self-surrender.* Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you." The yoke means service. It means whole-hearted service. You are to give up all for Christ, as he gave up all for you. The sacrifice was not grudged on his part; nor let it be on yours. You cannot be servant both to him and to the world, or yourself, too.

If you would ruin your soul's rest, and all hope of it, keep back part of the price,—offer a blemished sacrifice.

But see how our fathers of the Covenant, and under the Puritan flag, felt a sanctified pride in taking on this yoke of Christ,—the more so because it had the stains of his own agony upon it. Plain men, most of them, not drilled much in the philosophies of the Christian faith; with small knowledge, perhaps, of Christ's *teaching*, but knowing a great deal, somehow, of Christ *himself*!

They knew he had died for them; nor could they less than die for him!

Those were the men who, in restless days, found rest to their souls. Nor in any other way can the true rest ever come to us.

7. *It comes through the medium of a Christ-like temper.* "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." If we are troubled, how often is our temper to blame for it? We are angry, resentful, unforgiving, in circumstances where the Master himself would be patient and pitiful.

To-day, perhaps, the memory of a stinging word, spoken long ago, is rankling in the breast of some brother far away—and in our own breast too. We have not forgotten it; no more has he. And if it renders his dying hour less restful than it might have been, it may be the same also with ourselves.

How very needless, how poorly spirited, our little bits of retaliation seem, oftentimes, when we have slept over them for one night only! Charity is kind, not easily provoked; for want of only a little, we have embittered, a thousand times over, our own life and that of many innocent sufferers around us—where, otherwise, God's true rest had been.

8. *It comes through means of a Christ-like activity.* The "yoke" means ceaseless activity, as well as self-surrender. Christ's yoke, Christ's burden,—they are precisely what our nature needs, not less made and adjusted for our present and future

well-being than light is for the eye and music for the ear.

What is his reward for the service? Only this: to get more of it—more of the yoke, and more of the burden—to get harder work and longer hours! There is no shorter hour and higher money-wage movement here. As little is it in our service to Christ as it is in Christ's service to us.

It is a joy to the little children about your feet, or about your table, if they feel they can be of service in any small way,—how they delight in it for its own sake! And the only reward they care for is to be allowed to do a little more of it. So is it with the regenerated children of God in Christ Jesus.

Reader, let not the voice of Jesus here inviting you be in vain. Come to him. Cling to him. Take on his yoke. Take it on completely. Grudge nothing. Yield up life itself. So be to him a true servant, as he has been to you; and for reward, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21).

"Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;

'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word;

Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,—

Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?

I delivered thee when bound,

And, when bleeding, healed thy wound;

Sought thee wandering, set thee right,

Turned thy darkness into light.

Lord, it is my chief complaint,

That my love is weak and faint;

Yet I love thee, and adore:

O for grace to love thee more!"

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SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT SOCIETY.

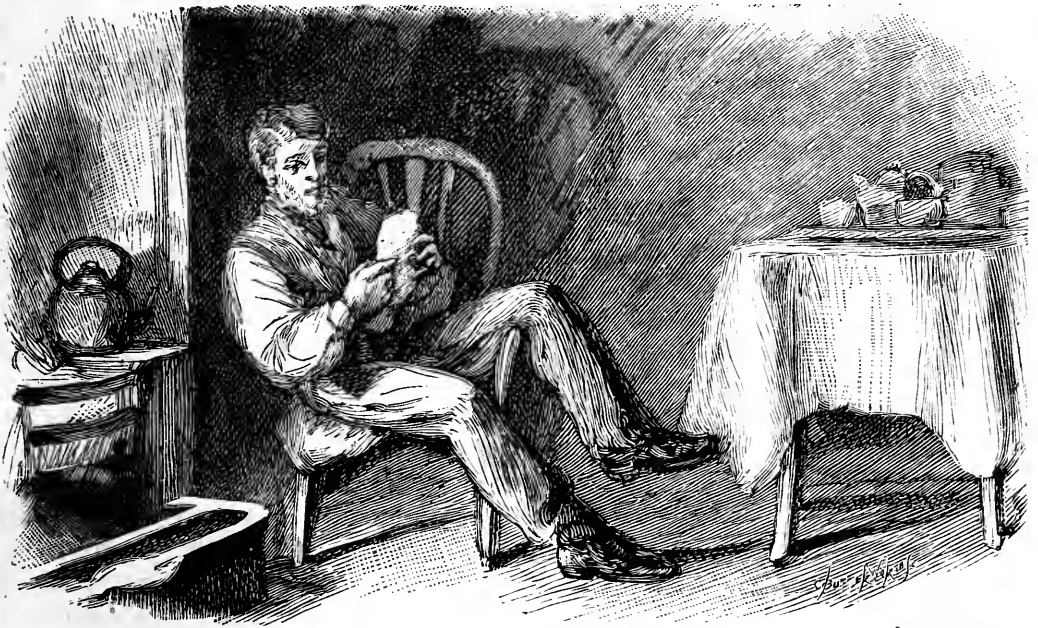
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

DECEMBER 1893.

A GOOD OLD MAN.



See page 2.

NOBODY in all the country round was more respected than good old EDWARD MUNNS. Poor and quiet and humble, he was not the man to make much noise in the world. Yet everybody was sorry when he died, and hundreds came flocking to the village when he was buried. And the reason was as plain as the grief.

As they turned from the grave, the neighbours said to each other,—“Well, if ever there was a good man in the world, that was old Master Munns.”

And after all they were likely to be right,—for when a man has lived in the same village all his lifetime, there is generally a good deal more

truth in what the neighbours say of him than in what is written on the tombstone. Master Munns had certainly gone in and out amongst them, trying to do all the good he could. The sick always expected a call from him, and declared that he did more good "nor all the doctor's stuff." The dying would rather have a talk with him than with any one else. And no matter who got into trouble, they always knew they could find a wise friend in Master Munns.

Nor had he always been one of the good folks. His father was a blacksmith, and Edward, the youngest son, was chosen to learn the trade. It had been well if his father had taught him nothing worse than the art and mystery of a smith. He was a drunkard, and young Edward was brought up in all the misery of a drunkard's home. What words can tell all that means? How that he who should win the children's bread keeps them in want and rags; how the father's house becomes only a place of hatred and cursing and cruel blows. Think of the wretched wife, and of the frightened children cowering away for shelter as the staggering steps are heard at the door. Thus young Edward was brought up. Little wonder that he bade fair to follow in the way in which he had been trained!

It was when he was about twenty-six years of age that there came the great change, and the beginning of a better life. God in his sovereign grace has many ways of bringing men to himself. But it is not often that the message is sent in such a singular way as it reached Edward Munns. His wife was very ill; he feared that she was dying. There were three little children to be cared for, and what would become of them without a mother? Sitting downstairs alone, hearing only the steps that moved in the sick-room overhead, and feeling as if the dreadful shadow

had already fallen on his home, all seemed so dreary that he was bowed down with utter misery—the burden was more than he could bear. There was no friend to help him; none that could comfort or strengthen him. There *was* just such a Friend as he needed, one who could comfort and strengthen and bless indeed; but of him Edward knew not.

He had sent that evening to the village shop for an ounce of tea. The paper in which it had been wrapped lay on the table close beside him. For some time he sat looking very sadly into the fire, whilst the light glittered in the tears that gathered in his eyes. Now as he stirred he caught sight of this piece of paper. It was a page torn out of an old Bible. He picked it up carelessly, and, holding it in the light of the fire, began to look over it, at first scarcely thinking of what he read.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"Ye shall find rest unto your souls;"—the words took hold of him. He read them again and again as they opened in their full meaning to his mind. He was burdened and heavy laden. Rest was what he longed for, and could not find in anything about him. Was there one who could take off his burden and quiet all his trouble? *"Ye shall find rest unto your souls"*—the word was plain and positive. And if others could find this rest, why should not he? Burying his face in his hands, he groaned in his misery, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

So the good work began. He earnestly sought the Saviour, but for some time he sought him in the wrong way. He tried to make himself *good enough to be saved*. He turned

from his sins, and did everything but the one thing needed. At last, as he was going along the street one day, the words occurred to him, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*" The entrance of the Word giveth light. In a moment he saw that Christ had borne his sins in his own body on the tree; and now He was able freely to save all that came to God by Him.

In a moment he let go all his own doings, and confidently looked to Jesus as his Saviour. He trusted the crucified Redeemer with all his heart. Then in a moment the burden fell from him. He had indeed come to Jesus, and now he found rest to his soul.

He gave himself at once to the work of the Lord. And first of all he began at home. By kindness, by firmness, and by the force of a good example, he won his wife and children to Jesus. He began with much simplicity and fear to exhort his neighbours to turn to the Lord, feeling himself unworthy for so great a work, and yet with much earnest entreaty, knowing that he had a message from on high. Of his preaching all bear loving testimony to this day. Simple, plain, homely, yet it was with "authority" and not as the scribes. Men can't write sermons like those that Edward preached, or make them either. They come only from the life of God in the soul. They are the utterance of the living Christ in the heart. His authority was seen in its results, and some are now useful workmen who were led to the Saviour by his preaching.

He was made a Leader of a religious class, and riveted the hearts of his members to himself by his gentleness and blameless life, whilst he directed them in their way by his wisdom and his own close walk with God. He became superintendent of the Sunday school, and much good was done there.

A man who had felt the curse of intemperance as he had felt it in his father's house might well set himself to do all that he could against this mighty evil, and early in his religious life he helped to establish a temperance society in his native village, of which he was the president until his death. He carried the good work further, by visiting villages in the neighbourhood, and there encouraging the people to imitate so good an example. One of the greatest joys of his life was a Band of Hope which he had formed in connection with the Sabbath school; and during his last illness he watched the procession from his bedroom window, weeping for very joy that he should have been able to train so many in habits of temperance.

But most of all he sought to do good by the uprightness of his conduct: truth in everything, love to everybody, and, first and foremost, his duty to his Lord and Master—these were the sermons that did most good. Everybody could listen to them whether they went to church or chapel. The deafest could hear them, and the plainest people could understand them. Nobody quarrelled with the doctrine, and no sermons were half so convincing as these.

We have heard of a man who said to a Christian worker, "I really do believe in your religion now."

"How is that?" asked the worker, surprised, for he had often talked with the man and only met with abuse.

"Well, you see, it was like this: a few days ago an old customer that I had not seen for years, came in and said that he wanted to pay a bill. I turned to the books, and found that it had been crossed out long ago as a bad debt. He told me that I had better cross it in again, for he had come to pay it. I stared in wonder. 'You may well wonder,' he said, laughing, 'but you see I heard a sermon the other day that

set me a-thinking, and I've made up my mind to serve God. I thought I would begin by paying my old debts."

Men really do believe in religion that makes those who profess it always do the right thing. And they don't believe in it if it does not. Old Master Munns felt that talk was an empty thing unless the life were right. This was one of his rules that did more good than anybody can tell, and yet it is something that everybody can do—*He never spoke against any one.* This is what he said—"If we can't do folks any good, we can keep from doing them any harm that way."

So, useful and beloved, he lived and laboured on until he was seventy years of age. An accident which occurred as he was on his way to preach gave a shock to his system from which he never recovered. The old man said quietly, "I have had notice to quit. The old place is falling in, but I know in whom I have believed."

'My soul, through my Redeemer's care,
Saved from the second death I feel,
My eyes from tears of dark despair,
My feet from falling into hell.'"

Shortly afterwards the dear old man passed away to his heavenly reward.

So he of the drunkard's home and the sad heart became a bright Christian, beloved of everybody who knew him, leaving much good behind him, and then having an abundant entrance into the fulness of joy.

Now, reader, will you put alongside of this the sad, worthless, sinful life that might have been, and, but

for the grace of God, that would have been?—a curse to itself, and a curse to all about it, leaving a track like a firebrand, all charred and blackened, and then going out into the utter darkness! *Your* life is hurrying away. What are you doing with it? Is it a round of working and eating and drinking and sleeping—never lifted up to the Eternal and to the higher and only worthy life? What is the end of it all if there be no service of God and no training for eternity? We may "*get on*," as it is called, but what is that if we don't *get up*? Is it enough to satisfy us that we should live a life empty of all that blesses men, and then die without hope? going out with that terrible sentence from the Saviour's lips, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" Are you living for that? Busy from morning till night, anxious and careworn, and is it all to end in that? God forbid! He has redeemed our lives from destruction. Jesus is come to help us and to be our Friend. He will help *you*. He gave himself for *you*. Seek him as your helper. Cast yourself upon him. Take him as your strength for all that is good and worthy. And your life shall be a blessing to yourself and to those about you, shining as the path of the just, brighter and brighter until "the perfect day," when the Master shall say, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

REV. M. GUY PEARCE.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

JANUARY 1894.

TIME'S MESSAGES.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep."—ROMANS xiii. 11.

"The time is short."—1 CORINTHIANS vii. 29.



TIME is making haste to be gone. It takes no pause. It does not ebb and flow, sometimes gaining and sometimes losing ground. Its course is ever onwards, onwards, with strange, sad speed, as if eager to reach its close.

Our years are fast filling up, and

their end is near. These years have been of a mingled, chequered nature here, partly bright, partly dark; but hereafter there is no such mixture. The eternity that is coming on is an eternity where all mingled things are separated, never to be mingled again; where good and

evil shall dwell apart; where the righteous and the unrighteous come not together; where grief and gladness each have their own region, their own kingdom, to rule over throughout all ages.

What deep solemnity does this cast over life! We die but *once*; and this makes life a solemn thing. "It is appointed unto men *once* to die." Could we cross and recross the dark river of death as often as we pleased, there would not be such a desperate urgency in the matter of making sure our salvation. For if we found we had omitted to prepare for eternity, we might return to complete the forgotten preparation. But this cannot be. We die but *once*; and this dying seals our doom.

We die and pass into the dust. A few brief years will bring us to the churchyard. And as our bodies crumble down, bone after bone, in the corrupting tomb, this earth with its busy scenes will be moving on as before. But our *soul*,—the soul that no grave can hold,—where will it be? This, O man, is the question which it so deeply concerns thee to settle.

What is to be thy lot hereafter? Where art thou to dwell for ever? With that question unsettled, canst thou eat, drink, and be merry? Canst thou go to the ballroom and join in the dance, the mirth, the song? Canst thou go to the tavern, and besot thyself till thou hast forgotten that thou hast a soul to care for, and an eternity to enter? Canst thou "kill time" with the novel or the jest-book, or the gay companion? Canst thou venture over the threshold of the theatre, or the haunt of lust, or the gaming-house? With that question unsettled, canst thou hurry onward through life so cheerfully, as if thou wert hastening to some glad festival?

Wilt thou not then prepare? How many voices speak aloud, and call thee to this? God says, PREPARE.

Each pain that shoots through your body says, PREPARE. Each sad sick-bed says, PREPARE. Each funeral says, PREPARE. Oh, then, PREPARE. Tarry not. For "what is thy life? it is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little, and then vanisheth away."

Dost thou know the way of being saved? Or, if not, art thou willing to learn? There is a way of being delivered out of the miseries of this mortal life, and made possessor of the endless kingdom. It concerns thee most deeply to know it, and that without delay.

Dost thou imagine that a little well-doing on thy part, a little repentance, a little turning away from sin, can avail to save thee? Dost thou think that thy bad deeds are not so bad, but that they may be counterbalanced by thy good ones, and that thy good ones are such that it would not be fair in God to cast thee away? Dost thou suppose that, aided by the death of Christ, thy good deeds have sufficient virtue in them to secure for thee an entrance into the kingdom? If so, thou hast utterly mistaken the way. Thou knowest not the God with whom thou hast to do, nor the sternness of that awful law which says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Thou canst not, either in whole or in part, be a saviour to thyself; neither can thy good deeds, if thou hast any such, avail to save thee. They cannot soothe thy guilty conscience, nor assure thee of the favour of Jehovah, nor bring thee the knowledge of pardon, nor open to thee the gate of the kingdom. Thy bad deeds must be thy destruction, if thou hast nought but thy good ones to ward it off. But God has had pity upon thy misery, and has provided a more excellent way.

Eighteen hundred years ago Jesus died on Calvary. He had done no sin, yet he died. He had kept, in every jot and tittle, the perfect law,

yet he died. He was the Son of God, yet he died. Nay, he died in anguish and bitter grief of soul. Why? Because God had so purposed it. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." But why did he so purpose it? Because of his love to the sinning ones of earth. It was a purpose of infinite love that led to the death of the only-begotten of the Father,—the Prince of Life. But how was this the proof of love? In this way: God had said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and that sentence could not be changed. Sin and death were to be linked inseparably together. "The wages of sin" were to be death. This death was our doom, and it must be borne. We must die. The penalty cannot be recalled. But though it cannot be recalled, it may be borne by another for us. But will the Lawgiver consent to the transference? Yes, he has consented. And is there one in the universe able to bear the penalty for us? Yes, there is the Son of God. But will the Father consent to part with the Son, and lay on him such a burden? Yes, he has parted with him. He has not spared him, but delivered him up. But what could induce him to do this,—to lay such a burden on such a Son? Only one thing—LOVE. Love thought of the transference. Love made the transfer. Love carried out the whole transaction. "It is finished." There hangs the Substitute, breathing out his soul into the Father's hands! "He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

This substitution was complete. The *whole* penalty was *wholly* laid upon the Sin-bearer. He bore it all. He "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Thou canst not be thine own sin-bearer, and thou dost not need to be. God has provided one. Christ has done all that was needed. *His* doings, not *thine*, are available for thee before God. Without these doings of the Substitute, God could only be just in condemning thee; but now, by means of these, he is righteous in forgiving thee.

Our message then is,—“The Son of God has come; he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; by his stripes we are healed: he has died, he has risen, he has gone up on high; the great sacrifice has been offered, the great ransom paid.” What tidings are these to the sinner that is trying in vain to bear his own sins, and propitiate God by his doings! All that you are trying to do for yourself, another has already done; and you are invited freely to enter on his labours. You are as free to go to God upon the footing of them, as if you had done and suffered all that the Son of God has suffered and done.

God's proposal to you is, that you should go as you are, and take all your guilt along with you to this great altar where the infinite Sacrifice is laid. Lay all your sins upon this Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Do not try to bear these sins yourself. Let the Sin-bearer do his work in your case, as he has done in the case of ten thousand others, and you will know the blessedness of being unburdened and forgiven. Hide none of your sins. You will gain nothing by hiding. Tell them all fully;—“if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Palliate none of them. In God's eye they are far worse than in yours. It is vain, therefore, to extenuate them. Yet, hideous as they are, they are not so much so that you need be afraid to carry them to God,

and lay them on the altar where the great Sacrifice is lying. Once laid there, they shall never rise up against thee!

Delay not thus to bring thy sins to the great Forgiver! There is no reluctance on his part, let there be none on thine. Be content to take the everlasting life freely at his hands, and hasten to obtain it. Believe and be forgiven! Believe and be blest! This is all! For God has so linked our believing the record of his free love with our salvation, that we cannot believe that record without being saved for evermore!

But **MAKE HASTE!** Thy days are numbered, and their end is near. Death is on every side, and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Thou canst not count upon another year, another day, another moment, therefore **MAKE HASTE.** Secure Jehovah's favour, and thy title to the kingdom, and then thou mayest smile at days of darkness,—then thou mayest rejoice as each hastening year brings the glory nearer.

And each passing year greets thee with a welcome from thy Lord. He bids thee welcome to pardon, life, and joy. He bids thee welcome to his kingdom and glory. Oh, take the welcome, and on the strength of it go to Him who alone can make thee happy, not this year alone, but all the years of thy sojourn here.

For the saint of God also, the flight of time has a message. It should suggest to him such thoughts and questions as these. A saint is one "called with a holy calling:" am I walking worthy of that holy

calling? A saint is one who is bought with a price, redeemed with precious blood: am I living as one thus bought and redeemed? A saint is one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, he is "a habitation of God through the Spirit:" am I acting as one who is a temple of the Holy Ghost? A saint is one who is dedicated to the Lord in all things, his time, his talents, his strength, his money: am I thus consecrating all I have to God, and laying them out for his service? A saint is a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, who looks for a coming Lord and a coming kingdom: am I thus living a pilgrim-life, passing over earth as a stranger, and longing for the day of meeting with an absent but beloved Lord? A saint is one who, having found the value of his own soul, is earnest for the ingathering of others: am I thus yearning over the dying multitudes around me, labouring, praying, planning, if that by any means I may save some?

Time has also a message to the *young*. It says: "Turn to the Lord *now*, make sure of eternal life *now*; do not trifle away the fresh hours of youth; do not waste the short years of your brief, frail life; remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; take Christ for your Saviour, and God for your treasure and portion *now*." The sooner you turn, the better for yourselves, the happier will be your life, the more will you be able to do for God, and the more glorious will be your crown.

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A LITTLE MESSENGER OF PEACE.



See page 2.

IN one of the straggling outskirts of North London, not many years ago, there was a small chapel, which had been built for the use of those who lived beyond reach of the old City churches. The surroundings were pleasant. People who courted the neighbourhood of green fields and garden leafage were just far enough away from dingy streets, while they

had as many small shopkeeping neighbours as were necessary to supply their homes with their daily wants.

The Sabbath congregation at the chapel was made up of comfortably-retired folks, and such as kept the village-like shops which showed themselves here and there among the more private dwellings. Those of the congregation who had

been received as church members used to meet at times in Christian fellowship. At such meetings the minister invited any to speak who had a word of encouragement or instruction for their fellow-members.

One Sabbath evening, a tall, good-looking, decently-dressed man stood up. On one side of him sat his wife, and on the other stood his child, a happy-faced little girl, on whose shoulder his hand lovingly rested. What he said was listened to with the deepest interest. It was in substance as follows:—

“You all know me, I suppose. You know what I was not long ago—a green-grocer who kept his shop open on Sundays. I used to go out with my cart on Sunday mornings, and my wife had to keep at home and mind the shop. People would sometimes tell me how bad it was,—what a sin it was to break the Sabbath in such a way; but I used to say to them, ‘The Sabbath is only for the Jew, and I am no Jew.’ Then they would tell me about the Saviour,—how he said, ‘The Sabbath was made for man,’ (Mark ii. 27.)—not merely for the Jew, but for man, for man’s good, that he might be good, and use the day in the worship of his Saviour, who ‘is Lord also of the Sabbath,’ (Mark ii. 28.) Then I used to laugh, for oh, my heart was hard, and say, ‘Well, as to worship, I must leave that to you, who seem to like it; as for me, I am made for work, and work must be minded, Sabbath or no Sabbath. And I should like to know,’ I used to say, ‘how would you like to be without green stuff for your Sunday dinner? You don’t seem to mind how you get it, so it comes fresh on Sunday morning, while you are at your worship. The servant or somebody else is kept at home to take it in; and worship doesn’t go for much while we wink at other people’s sins, or enjoy what we get out of other people’s work on the Sunday.’

“But when, in my sneering way, I had answered one, another would tell me how the blessed Saviour, when he had finished the work of our redemption, ‘entered into his rest as God did from his,’ (Heb. iv. 10;) and how the day of his rising from the dead, when his work on earth was done, became holy to his disciples; and how they observed ‘the first day of the week’ as a Sabbath, or seventh day’s rest, which they kept as ‘the Lord’s Day;’ and how still ‘there remaineth therefore a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God;’ (Heb. iv. 9,) until the work of mortal life is done, and a Sabbath begins which will never end.

“All they said, however, was no use: it was like a puff of smoke to me—soon gone, leaving no mark. ‘All very well,’ I used to say, ‘for you who think yourselves God’s people. You may rest for anything I know; but I reckon my work is as good as your rest, and so I’ll work while I may.’ Oh, how hard my heart was!

“Now and then a neighbour would be very sharp upon me about the commandment, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,’ (Ex. xx. 8–11,) and would ask me how I could forget it, as one of the ten commandments which Christ said he came ‘not to destroy, but to fulfil.’ (Matt. v. 17.) ‘Don’t you know,’ they would say, ‘that the ten commandments are binding on Gentiles as well as Jews,—that we have no right to break God’s Sabbath any more than we have to worship idols, or to take God’s name in vain, or abuse our parents, or commit murder or adultery, or to steal, or bear false witness, or covet what belongs to our neighbour?’

“‘Yes, yes, I know,’ was my answer, ‘But why should you talk to me about one command, while you are forgetting another? Have you no more gods than one, you who for six days of the week mind

nothing in your thoughts and hearts but business profits or pleasure? Are you sure that your sharp practice in trade is not too much like stealing to be honest? or that you are not too free with God's name? or that you never cast an evil eye on your neighbour's goods? I'm inclined to think that you are not quite so much at rest in your thoughts on the Sunday, or as pure from trade or sport in your heart, as you seem to be.'

"So I used to fight off everybody who tried to show me my sins. I wasn't to be touched. I cared for nobody. My conscience was getting hardened. I can look back now, and see how it used to trouble my wife. I loved my dear little girl, but I didn't think that my example might ruin her. My wife saw it, though, and quietly did her best to save the child, by sending her to the Sunday school. My heart was touched at last, and I'll tell you how it was.

"When the shop was shut on Sunday evenings, I was fond of taking my little girl on my knee. One Sunday evening I was playing with her curls, when she looked up at me like a little angel, and said,

"'Father, God doesn't love you, does he?'

"'Why should you think he doesn't, my dear?'

"'Because you keep the shop open on *His* day; and don't rest yourself, nor let mother rest.'

"The words went like a sword through my heart. All the arguments I had ever heard—all the warnings—had gone for nothing with me; but these words from those dear lips took away all my strength. It seemed as if they touched a spring that opened all my soul to its own sight. What a restless sinner I had been! Oh, those words from my own child—'You don't rest yourself, nor let mother rest'—they cut me to the quick! They seemed to mean, 'You

rob yourself of comfort by breaking God's order; but why rob those who love you of their Sabbath rights and joys?' I saw then how the Sabbath-breaker multiplies misery, by disturbing the Sabbath of all around him, violating his neighbours' rights by trampling on God's law; not only wanting to be free from God's service himself, but unjustly preventing others from serving God in peace. The child's words pierced me, but my heart softened at their touch. I felt the tears coming, and said, as I kissed the darling, 'The shop shall be shut next Sunday, my dear.'

"That Sunday came. The shop was not opened; nor has it ever been opened on the Lord's Day since. When the second Sunday came, I did not know what to do with myself. I was wretched. I went out into the fields, and wandered about, finding no rest anywhere. In the evening I took up my child again, and after a little while she looked into my face, and said,

"Father, God doesn't love you yet, does he?'

"'Why not, dear?'

"'Because you don't go to His house.'

"This was stroke upon stroke. As well as I could speak, I said,

"'I will go next Sunday, dear. Will you go with me?'

"'O yes, father, that will be nice! and mother will go too.'

"That Sunday came. We were in this little chapel; and here, while I listened, what was begun by God's blessing on my own child's words was completed. My heart was broken in pieces, and poured out its first earnest prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' (Luke xviii. 13.) I sought the minister's advice in the vestry; and oh, happy Sabbath! I came home with my soul filled with peace and love for Him who had fulfilled his promise in me, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' (Matt. xi. 28, 29.) How Christ's words came rushing into my mind while I sat at home, full of joy, holding my child to my heart, with my wife hanging over me rejoicing. 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. xviii. 3.) Now I was in the kingdom with my darling little one; and it seemed as if Jesus was saying, 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.' (Matt. xviii. 4, 5.) 'Lord,' I said, 'my child has led me to thee, and I have been brought to receive thee; and now, thou art Lord of my Sabbath,—my peace, my rest, the heaven of my home.'

"So it was that I learned to keep the Sabbath. So, by means of my little precious child here, I have found out what it is 'to enter into *His* rest.' Oh what a blessed 'Sabbath-keeping' he has opened in my heart! How dear is this holy day to me! Oh that everybody knew, as I am beginning to know, the meaning of God's own words about the Sabbath,—'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine

own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' (Isa. lviii. 13, 14.) Yes! he hath spoken truth. My Sabbaths are happy because he is my delight. And in giving up my own thoughts, and pleasures, and words, and ways, I find his thoughts, and words, and ways, making me restful. And he gives me to live in 'high places,' too,—above my old fears and cares. My six days' labour prospers as it never did before; and my family and myself inherit the 'promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' (1 Tim. iv. 8.)"

Such was the man's story, as he stood with his hand tenderly resting on the "little child" who had been his messenger of peace.

Reader, have you, like him, learned the sanctity of the Sabbath, by receiving the Spirit of peace into your heart? Have you found the joy of observing "the Lord's Day" by coming to "the Lord of the Sabbath" for rest? Has your six days' labour become healthful and sweet from the hallowing grace of your weekly "Sabbath-keeping"? If not, when, where do you look for rest? There is none for you, until, forgiven and at rest in Jesus Christ, you know something of what it is to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

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REPENTANCE MUST GO WITH FORGIVENESS.



It is clear that repentance is bound up with the forgiveness of sins. In Acts v. 31 we read that Jesus is "*exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.*" These two blessings come from that sacred hand which once was nailed to the tree, but is now raised to glory. Repentance and forgiveness are riveted together by the eternal purpose of God. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Repentance must go with remission, and you will see that it is so if you think a little upon the matter. *It cannot be that pardon of sin should be given to an impenitent sinner*; this were to confirm him in

his evil ways, and to teach him to think little of evil. If the Lord were to say, "You love sin, and live in it, and you are going on from bad to worse, but, all the same, I forgive you," this were to proclaim a horrible licence for iniquity. The foundations of social order would be removed, and moral anarchy would follow. I cannot tell what innumerable mischiefs would certainly occur if you could divide repentance and forgiveness, and pass by the sin while the sinner remained as fond of it as ever. In the very nature of things, if we believe in *the holiness of God*, it must be so, that if we continue in our sin, and will not repent of it, we cannot be forgiven, but must reap the consequences of our obstinacy. According to the infinite goodness of God, we are promised that if we will forsake our sins, confessing them, and will, by faith, accept the grace which is provided in Christ Jesus, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But, so long as God lives, there can be no promise of mercy to those who continue in their evil ways, and refuse to acknowledge their wrong-doing. Surely no rebel can expect the king to pardon his treason while he remains in open revolt. No one can be so foolish as to imagine that the Judge of all the earth will put away our sins if we refuse to put them away ourselves.

Moreover, it must be so for *the completeness of divine mercy*. That mercy which could forgive the sin and yet let the sinner live in it would be scant and superficial mercy. It would be unequal and deformed mercy, lame upon one of its feet, and withered as to one of its hands. Which, think you, is the greater privilege, cleansing from the guilt of sin, or deliverance from the power of sin? I will not attempt to weigh

in the scales two mercies so surpassing. Neither of them could have come to us apart from the precious blood of Jesus. But it seems to me that to be delivered from the dominion of sin, to be made holy, to be made like to God, must be reckoned the greater of the two, if a comparison has to be drawn. To be forgiven is an immeasurable favour. We make this one of the first notes of our psalm of praise,—“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.” But if we could be forgiven, and then could be permitted to love sin, to riot in iniquity, and to wallow in lust, what would be the use of such a forgiveness? Might it not turn out to be a poisonous sweet, which would most effectually destroy us? To be washed, and yet to lie in the mire; to be pronounced clean, and yet to have the leprosy white on one’s brow, would be the veriest mockery of mercy. What is it to bring the man out of his sepulchre if you leave him dead? Why lead him into the light if he is still blind? We thank God, that He who forgives our iniquities also heals our diseases. He who washes us from the stains of the past also uplifts us from the foul ways of the present, and keeps us from falling in the future. We must joyfully accept both repentance and remission; they cannot be separated. The covenant heritage is one and indivisible, and must not be parcelled out. To divide the work of grace would be to cut the living child in halves; and those who would permit this have no interest in it.

I will ask you who are seeking the Lord, whether you would be satisfied with one of these mercies alone? Would it content you, my reader, if God would forgive you your sin and then allow you to be as worldly and wicked as before? Oh, no: the quickened spirit is more afraid of sin itself than of the

penal results of it. The cry of your heart is not, "Who shall deliver me from punishment?" but, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Who shall enable me to live above temptation, and to become holy even as God is holy?" Since the unity of repentance with remission agrees with gracious desire, and since it is necessary for the completeness of salvation, and for holiness' sake, rest you sure that it abides.

Repentance and forgiveness are joined together *in the experience of all believers*. There never was a person yet who did unfeignedly repent of sin with believing repentance who was not forgiven; and, on the other hand, there never was a person forgiven who had not repented of his sin. I do not hesitate to say that beneath the copes of heaven there never was, there is not, and there never will be, any case of sin being washed away, unless at the same time the heart was led to repentance and faith in Christ. Hatred of sin and a sense of pardon come together into the soul, and abide together while we live.

These two things act and react upon each other: the man who is forgiven therefore repents; and the man who repents is also most assuredly forgiven. Remember first, that forgiveness leads to repentance.

When we are sure that we are forgiven, then we abhor iniquity; and I suppose that when faith grows into full assurance, so that we are certain beyond a doubt that the blood of Jesus has washed us whiter than snow, it is then that repentance reaches to its greatest height. Repentance grows as faith grows. Do not make any mistake about it: repentance is not a thing of days and weeks, a temporary penance to be got over as fast as possible! No; it is the grace of a lifetime, like faith itself. God's little children

repent, and so do the young men and the fathers. Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith. All the while that we walk by faith and not by sight, the tear of repentance glitters in the eye of faith. That is not true repentance which does not come of faith in Jesus, and that is not true faith in Jesus which is not tinged with repentance. Faith and repentance, like the Siamese twins, are vitally joined together. In proportion as we believe in the forgiving love of Christ, in that proportion we repent; and in proportion as we repent of sin and hate evil, we rejoice in the fulness of the absolution which Jesus is exalted to bestow. You will never value pardon unless you feel repentance; and you will never taste the deepest draught of repentance until you know that you are pardoned. It may seem a strange thing, but so it is—the bitterness of repentance and the sweetness of pardon blend in the flavour of every gracious life, and make up an incomparable happiness.

These two covenant gifts are the mutual assurance of each other. If I know that I repent, I know that I am forgiven. How am I to know that I am forgiven except I know also that I am turned from my former sinful course? To be a believer is to be a penitent. Faith and repentance are but two spokes of the same wheel, two handles of the same plough. Repentance has been well described as a heart broken *for* sin, and *from* sin; and it may equally well be spoken of as turning and returning. It is a change of mind of the most thorough and radical sort, and it is attended with sorrow for the past, and a resolve of amendment in the future.

Now, when that is the case, we may be certain that we are forgiven; for the Lord never made a heart to

be broken for sin and broken from sin, without pardoning it. If, on the other hand, we are enjoying pardon, through the blood of Jesus, and are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, we know that our repentance and faith are of the right sort.

Do not regard your repentance as the cause of your remission, but as the companion of it. Do not expect to be able to repent until you see the grace of our Lord Jesus, and his readiness to blot out your sin. Keep these blessed things in their places, and view them in their relation to each other. Repentance of sin and faith in divine pardon are the warp and woof of the fabric of real conversion. By these tokens shall you know an Israelite indeed.

To come back to the scripture upon which we are meditating: both forgiveness and repentance flow from the same source, and are given by the same Saviour. The Lord Jesus in his glory bestows both upon the same persons. You are neither to find the remission nor the repentance elsewhere. Jesus has both ready, and he is prepared to bestow them now, and to bestow them most freely, on all who will accept them at his hands. Let it never be forgotten that Jesus gives all that is needful for our salvation. It is highly important that all seekers after mercy should remember this. Faith is as much the gift of God as is the Saviour upon whom that faith relies. Repentance of sin is as truly the work of grace as the making of an

atonement by which sin is blotted out. Salvation, from first to last, is of grace alone. You will not misunderstand me. It is not the Holy Spirit who repents. He has never done anything for which he should repent. If he could repent, it would not meet the case; we must ourselves repent of our own sin, or we are not saved from its power. It is not the Lord Jesus Christ who repents. What should he repent of? We ourselves repent with the full consent of every faculty of our mind. The will, the affections, the emotions, all work together most heartily in the blessed act of repentance for sin; and yet at the back of all that is our personal act there is a secret holy influence which melts the heart, gives contrition, and produces a complete change. The Spirit of God enlightens us to see what sin is, and thus makes it loathsome in our eyes. The Spirit of God also turns us towards holiness, makes us heartily to appreciate, love, and desire it, and thus gives us the impetus by which we are led onward from stage to stage of sanctification. The Spirit of God works in us to will and to do according to God's good pleasure. To that good Spirit let us submit ourselves at once, that he may lead us to Jesus, who will freely give us the double benediction of repentance and remission, according to the riches of his grace.

"BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED."

—By Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

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THE YOUNG DOCTOR.



THE year 1873 was drawing towards its close, when a number of mutual friends gathered on the platform of one of our railway stations. We had come to say "Farewell" and bid "God speed" to some of the Lord's children who were leaving Edinburgh for abroad. Just ere the train departed, my friend called me to the carriage window, and, with

all the tearful earnestness of a mother's love, said, "You will keep your eye on Johnny, won't you? Promise me you will." To this I most readily assented. She well knew, and he also, the one thing lacking which most her heart desired for her son—the knowledge of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and the yielding of the heart, yea, of himself, to Him.

John M'F. was the youngest son of his mother,—she a widow,—and but a few months previously had graduated in medicine at the University of Edinburgh, shortly after attaining his majority. He was now engaged as house physician in the Infirmary.

He was a great athlete. It mattered not what line he went in for, he was sure to be head and chief. His fearless play cost him dear. During the progress of a football match, late in January, he came into collision with an opponent, and was flung violently to the ground, receiving a severe and painful injury to one of his knee-joints. He was carried off the field, and thence conveyed to his rooms in the Infirmary.

Of this circumstance I did not hear till the middle of February, when, one Saturday evening, a note, pencilled by a strange hand at his request, summoned me to his bedside. Hastening to the Infirmary, I found the once stalwart man more helpless than an infant. The injury to the knee-joint, though at first seeming of but trivial importance, had paved the way for one of the most acute attacks of rheumatic fever I ever witnessed.

He thanked me for coming, and, expressing my sorrow at finding him in such a case, I inquired if in any way I could serve him, and why he had sent for me.

"Monday the 16th will be the mail day, and I want you to write to my mother," was his reply.

To this I most gladly assented, noted what he wished said, and then added, "And may I tell her that you have found the Lord? She will be sure to want to know that."

He quickly turned his face to the wall, while involuntary tears rolled down his cheeks as he answered, "I wish I could say that; I would give all the world, if I had it, to find Him; but I fear it's too late now."

"Not at all," I replied. "It is

never too late while you are in life. He is willing to have and to save you; and His word says, '*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *Now* is the day of salvation.' Do you, my dear John, really want to have Christ? This is the only open question."

His answer was very like himself: "I have been praying to God all day. I am now anxious to find Christ, and to be saved, but I fear it's no use. Besides, it's a cowardly thing to turn now. I know it's only the fear of death that makes me turn."

I sought to open to him, as simply as I could, God's way of salvation, viz. the atoning work and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus, on the one hand; and the sinner's simple acceptance by faith of God's offered mercy, apart from all his own works or feelings, on the other. Having read the word and prayed with him, I then left, with instructions to say to his mother that at length he was "really anxious to be saved."

During the space of a month I visited him constantly to speak of Jesus, and press on him the urgent necessity of at once receiving Christ.

By the mail of 2nd March he had sufficiently rallied to be able to pen a few lines to his mother, telling her of his hope of full and rapid recovery. Perhaps the exertion of this may have been too much for his exhausted frame; but be it as it may, within a few days bad symptoms set in, and hopes gave place to the gravest apprehension on the part of those who watched him, when, on Friday the 13th, vomiting of the most intractable character began, and lasted persistently day and night till the end.

This day I saw him, still unsaved; but his physical condition was such that I could say but a few words, pointing him again to the Lord Jesus as the friend of sinners. Pressure of work quite prevented an intended visit on the Saturday;

but on Lord's Day afternoon an uncontrollable impulse led me, spite of much hindrance, to his bedside. A glance told me that Death had marked him as an early victim. To me it seemed now, or never. By his request we were left alone.

I read from my little pocket Testament the lovely tale of the return of the wanderer, and the welcome he received (Luke xv. 11-32). Dear John listened as he had never done before; he owned his sin, his mis-spent life, his often stifled convictions when in health, his ill treatment of Christ, and of the grace of God. He had "come to himself" on the verge of the grave. "Repentance toward God" was manifest in the way he judged himself, and the whole past, in view of God and eternity. "Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" was as yet, however, wanting.

Turning to Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, I read once and again to him that blessed 15th verse—resting-place of countless weary, self-judged hearts and empty sinners: "THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF." Its sweetness and fulness the Holy Ghost applied in power to his soul, and he saw that Christ had come for such as he—sinners. One difficulty remained: he had done nothing good in God's sight—plenty of that which he now, and truly, judged bad. Satan, fearful to lose a victim, suggested the necessity of his doing something. To this I cited the case of the dying thief, saved in the very jaws of death, unable to do aught but fear God, judge himself, confess Christ, and cast himself unreservedly on Him (Luke xxiii. 39-43), and reminded him of the dying words of the blessed Lord, "It is finished."

There was a moment's pause, and

then the final query fell from his lips: "But, doctor, is there nothing to do but believe?"

"BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED," was my only reply.

A minute or two after, he turned his head to me, as tears filled his eyes, and softly said, "I believe Him now. I can trust Him now. I see it all."

He begged me kneel and thank God for His abundant mercy to him in thus saving him. This done, I left him, with a restful look on his wasted yet still handsome countenance, that had never been seen there before.

A late visit on Lord's Day evening, and one early on Monday morning, gave me glad confirmation as to dear John's simple and real faith in the Lord. In the afternoon his strength rapidly gave way; and now, for the first time, I think, he himself laid aside all hopes of recovery.

A little respite in his sickness ensuing, his nurse endeavoured to cheer him, saying, "You are a little better, doctor; try and bear up. Perhaps you will get better yet. Many a prize you have won, and many an honour gained"—

Putting out his wasted hand, he motioned her to silence, and then said, "Now I have gained the crown of glory. I am dying, and I am not afraid to die. I am dying happy."

When I reached him between ten and eleven P.M., I saw a very great change since the morning. He welcomed me with a sweet smile, and "I'm so glad you have come."

The nurses leaving us alone, I got by his side, and then softly said, "Going home, John?"

"They think I'm dying," he replied. "What do you think?"

"It looks very like it, dear."

"Yes, I think so too," he quietly rejoined.

"And you are going to Jesus?"

He turned his lustrous eyes on me,

and inquired, "Do you think He will let me slip at the last?"

"Not He," I said; "it is not like Him."

"But I have known Him such a short while."

"Never mind that: you do know Him?" "Yes."

"And trust Him simply?" "Yes."

There was a slight pause, and then, the enemy again making a final assault on this babe in Christ, he took my hand in both his emaciated ones, and, with a wistful gaze right into my eyes that I can never forget, added, "But, doctor, are you sure He won't let me slip, just at the very last?"

"Listen to His own words," I rejoined: "'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE; and they SHALL NEVER PERISH, NEITHER SHALL ANY (*man or devil*) PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY HAND. My Father, which gave them me, is GREATER THAN ALL; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand' (John x. 27-29). There, will that do?"

The cloud was dispelled, the enemy routed by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" and, as the sweetest smile of contented joy broke over his wasted countenance, he pressed my hand firmly, and said, "Yes, His will be done, but oh, *comfort my mother!*"

On my asking him now if he was dying happily, he replied, "Yes, quite happily; nevertheless, I should have liked to have lived a little while, to serve and please the Lord."

A parting message to his mother,

and an assurance, with his love, that he would meet her in heaven, exhausted his strength; and at his request I again thanked the Lord for his salvation, and then, being called away, left him, promising to return at midnight.

Midnight had passed, and Tuesday 17th had begun its course with us when I got back to the Infirmary. My young friend was rapidly sinking. Though racked with pain, he listened gratefully through the night to the verses of Scripture I whispered in his ear, and would oft reply, "Tell me more; tell me more." His last words to me, spoken about 7 A.M., soon after which he became unconscious, were, "If I die, all is well." With his head resting in my hands, he gently breathed his last at 7.25 A.M., and his spirit passed to be "for ever" with that Lord whose grace he had but begun to taste on earth.

The dying request, "Comfort my mother," suggested the wording of the message which the telegraph wires in due course carried abroad: "*Seventeenth—Johnny departed peacefully to Christ,*"—tidings which at once would break and bind again the mother's heart.

And now, dear reader, let the faithful saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," since it is "worthy of all acceptance," have thy acceptance on the very spot where now thou readest this tale of God's grace to one like thyself.

—Abridged, by permission.

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ARE YOU LIVING OR DEAD?



See page 2.

READER,—There are many dead men walking up and down in the world. Perhaps you are one of them. Perhaps while you read the tract now in your hands you are yourself a *dead man*.

Does this seem to you absurd? Does this startle you? Go and look at the second chapter of the Epistle

to the Ephesians, and see what the first verse says. Remember that “dead” is the word which describes the state of every one who is unconverted. He may be rich, clever, healthy, and great; but so long as his heart is not changed he is dead. Are you a dead man?

“Dead” is a strong word, but it

is not my own coining and invention. I did not choose it. The Holy Ghost told Paul to write it down about the Ephesians: "You hath he quickened, who were *dead*" (Eph. ii. 1). The Lord Jesus Christ made use of it in the parable of the prodigal son: "This my son was *dead*, and is alive again" (Luke xv. 24, 32). You will read it also in the Epistle to the Corinthians: "One died for all, then were all *dead*" (2 Cor. v. 14). Shall a mortal man be wise above that which is written? Must we not take heed to speak that which we find in the Bible, and neither less nor more.

"Dead" is an awful idea, and one that man is most unwilling to receive. He does not like to allow the whole extent of his soul's disease. He shuts his eyes to the real amount of his danger. Many an one will allow me to say, that naturally most people "are not quite what they ought to be: they are thoughtless,—they are unsteady,—they are gay,—they are wild,—they are not serious enough." But dead? Oh no: I must not mention it! It is going too far to say that. The idea is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

My dear reader, what we like in religion is of very little consequence. The only question is, What is written? What saith the Lord? God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, and God's words are not man's words. God says of every living person, who is not a decided Christian,—be he high or low, rich or poor, old or young,—*he is dead*.

In this, as in everything else, God's words are right. Nothing could be said more correct, nothing more accurate, nothing more faithful, nothing more true. Stay a little, and let me reason this out with you. Come and see.

What should you have said, if you had seen Joseph weeping over his

father Jacob?—"He fell upon his face and wept upon him, and kissed him" (Gen. l. 1). But there was no reply to his affection. All about that aged countenance was unmoved, silent, and still. Doubtless you would have guessed the reason,—Jacob was dead.

What would you have said, if you had heard the Levite speaking to his wife, when he found her lying before the door in Gibeah? "Up," he said, "and let us be going. But none answered" (Judges xix. 28). His words were thrown away. There she lay, motionless, stiff, and cold. You know the cause,—She was dead.

What should you have thought, if you had seen the Amalekite stripping Saul of his royal ornaments in mount Gilboa? He "took from him the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm" (2 Sam. i. 10). There was no resistance. Not a muscle moved in that proud face; not a finger was raised to prevent him. And why?—Saul was dead.

What should you have thought, if you had met the widow's son in the gate of Nain, lying on a bier, wrapped about with grave-clothes, followed by his weeping mother, carried slowly towards the tomb? (Luke vii. 12). Doubtless it would have been all clear to you. It would have needed no explanation,—The young man was dead.

Now, reader, I say this is just the condition of every man by nature in the matter of his soul. I say this is just the state of the vast majority of people around us in spiritual things. God calls to them continually,—by mercies, by afflictions; by ministers, by his Word;—but they do not hear his voice. The Lord Jesus Christ mourns over them, pleads with them, sends them gracious invitations, knocks at the door of their hearts;—but they do not regard it. The

crown and glory of their being, that precious jewel, their immortal soul, is being seized, plundered, and taken away;—and they are utterly unconcerned. The devil is carrying them away, day after day, along the broad road that leads to destruction; and they allow him to make them his captives without a struggle. And this is going on everywhere,—all around you,—among all classes,—through the length and breadth of the land. You know it in your own conscience while you read this paper. You must be aware of it. You cannot deny it. And what then, I ask you, can be said more perfectly true than that which God says: we are all by nature spiritually *dead*?

Yes; when a man's *heart* is cold and unconcerned about religion,—when his *hands* are never employed in doing God's work,—when his *feet* are not familiar with God's ways,—when his *tongue* is seldom or never used in prayer and praise,—when his *ears* are deaf to the voice of Christ in the gospel,—when his *eyes* are blind to the beauty of the kingdom of heaven,—when his *mind* is full of the world, and has no room for spiritual things;—when these marks are to be found in a man, the word of the Bible is the right word to use about him,—and that word is "*dead*."

We may not like this, perhaps. We may shut our eyes both to facts in the world, and texts in the Word. But God's truth must be spoken, and to keep it back does positive harm. Truth must be spoken, however condemning it may be. So long as a man does not serve God with body, soul, and spirit, he is not really alive. So long as he puts the first things last and the last first, buries his talent like an unprofitable servant, and brings the Lord no revenue of honour, so long in God's sight he is dead. He is not filling the place in creation for which he

was intended. He is not using his powers and faculties as God meant them to be used. The poet's words are strictly true,—

"He only lives who lives to God,
And all are dead beside."

This is the true explanation of sin not felt,—and sermons not believed,—and good advice not followed,—and the gospel not embraced,—and the world not forsaken,—and the cross not taken up,—and self-will not mortified,—and evil habits not laid aside,—and the Bible seldom read,—and the knee never bent in prayer. Why is all this on every side? The answer is simple: *Men are dead*.

This is the true account of that host of excuses, which so many make with one consent. Some have no learning, and some have no time. Some are oppressed with business, and some with poverty. Some have difficulties in their own families, and some in their own health. Some have peculiar obstacles in their calling, which others, we are told, cannot understand; and others have peculiar drawbacks at home, and they wait to have them removed. But God has a shorter word in the Bible, which describes all these people at once: He says, *they are dead*.

This is the true explanation of many things which wring a faithful minister's heart. Many around him never attend a place of worship at all. Many attend so irregularly, that it is clear they think it of no importance. Many attend once on a Sunday who might just as easily attend twice. Many never come to the Lord's table,—never appear at a week-day means of grace of any kind. And why is all this? Often, far too often, there can only be one reply about these people: *They are dead*.

See now, dear reader, how all professing Christians should examine themselves and try their own state. It is not in churchyards alone where the dead are to be found. There are

only too many inside our churches, and close to our pulpits,—too many on the benches, and too many in the pews. The land is like the valley in Ezekiel's vision, full of bones, and those very dry. There are dead souls in all our parishes, and dead souls in all our streets. There is hardly a family in which all live to God: there is hardly a house in which there is not some one dead. Oh, search and look at home! Prove your own self.

See too how sad is the condition of all who have gone through no spiritual change; whose hearts are still the same as in the day they were born. There is a mountain of division between them and heaven. They have yet to pass from death to life. Oh, that they did but see and know their danger! Alas, it is one fearful mark of spiritual death, that, like natural death, it is not felt! We lay our beloved ones tenderly and gently in their narrow beds, but they feel nothing of what we do. "The dead," says the wise man, "know not anything" (Eccles. ix. 5). And this is just the case with dead souls.

See too what reason ministers have to be anxious about their congregations. We feel that time is short, and life uncertain. We know that death spiritual is the high road that leads to death eternal. We fear lest any of you should die in your sins, unprepared, unrenowned, impenitent, unchanged. Oh, marvel not if we often speak strongly and plead with you warmly! We dare not give you flattering titles, amuse

you with trifles, say smooth things, and cry "Peace, peace," when life and death are at stake, and nothing less. Ministers may preach to you, and pray with you, but they cannot bestow spiritual life. They cannot reach your hearts. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase (1 Cor. iii. 6).

Who then can make a dead soul alive? No one can do it but God. He only who formed man out of the dust, and gave life to his body, can ever give life to his soul. His is the special office to do it by his Spirit, and his also is the power.

Reader, the glorious gospel contains provision for your spiritual, as well as your eternal life. The Lord Jesus is a complete Saviour. To him the Spirit joins the sinner, and raises him by that union from death to life. In him the sinner lives after he has believed. The spring of all his vitality is the union between Christ and his soul, which the Spirit begins and keeps up. Christ is the appointed fountain of all spiritual life, and the Holy Ghost the appointed agent who conveys that life to our souls.

Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you would have life. The moment the dead man touched the body of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet (2 Kings xiii. 21).—The moment you touch the Lord Jesus with the hand of faith, you are alive unto God, as well as forgiven all trespasses. Come, and your soul shall live.

BISHOP RYLE.

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RELIGION OR CHRIST.



"WILLIE has brought a bonnie wife home, with winsome ways and a loving heart, but I'm wondering all the time if she knows the Lord Jesus Himself."

"Well, wife, I am hoping so. It may not be just her way to talk out about Him, as you and I do; you see we have grown used to His company. But I'm thinking she

must care about Him, for I found her reading His word to-day, or a book that looked just like it."

"Ay, a book that looked just like it," the mother said in a low tone, with a sigh; then, speaking out again, she added more cheerily, "Well, we will just tell Himself all our hopes and fears, and ask Him to make her coming a blessing to her-

self and to us all ; and when He has the matter left in His own hands, we can wait and trust Him ;" and the pious old couple turned together into the little chamber, in which for many a long year they had been accustomed to pour out their hearts to the One who was to them, not merely their Saviour and their God, but their known and tried personal Friend.

This was the hallowed home into which Willie, their only remaining son, had brought his young wife on a visit, and to introduce her to his parents. She was a *professing* Christian, they were *possessing* Christians ; and she had not been many hours in the house before the godly old mother, who took her to her heart from the moment she saw her, discovered that, in spite of what was naturally very lovable, and in spite also of what was outwardly very religious, there was something lacking, and that something, she too truly felt, was the personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The discovery was a sorrowful one to Willie's mother. When he had written from London some months before, to tell his parents in the north of his approaching marriage, he had described his Alice as one not merely naturally bright and attractive, but as one who loved the Lord, and was devoted to His service ; and the old couple had rejoiced in the thought of her being a real helper of his faith. Now she had come, they had found her all they could wish, save on the point where their wishes were deepest.

Not that Alice had been a hypocrite. She had been a diligent Sunday school teacher, her class was always the most orderly in the school, and her scholars the most visited in their homes by their teacher. She was interested in missionary work, abroad and at home. She visited among the sick, and read the Bible and prayers from

a book to them. She was an active member of the Dorcas meeting ; and was thought by every one, what Willie thought her, a truly earnest Christian. Nay more, she herself believed she was this.

Sometimes, after their marriage, Willie puzzled her, when he spoke of conversion as of a something that passed between his soul and God, of which she felt she knew nothing.

Alice was no Pharisee : she did not pride herself in her works or her religious duties, she was simply satisfied with them. She was amiable, and liked serving others ; so she worked, and she thought God demanded it of her ; so she went through forms and ceremonies. The question of sin had never been raised between her soul and God, so she knew nothing of substitution ; she had never found out she was lost, and therefore she knew no need of a SAVIOUR, who must be her own personal Saviour, though of course she talked of "our Saviour" in a general way.

She too discovered there was a difference between her new relations and herself, and one day said to her husband, "I do not understand your parents' religion, though I love them dearly. It makes me uncomfortable. They speak of our Saviour as though He were a third person in the room with them, at meals, every time ; it often makes me shiver. It is as though they had only their bodies down here, and their thoughts and hopes and joys were far off." Even then he did not discern that his wife's was only an outward performance of duties, and no living link with a person, and he answered, "Yes, truly, Alice, the Lord is no God afar off to my parents, and they love to speak to Him and of Him. I think, maybe, we have been too much occupied with our work for Him, and perhaps, too, with the earthly joy He has given us, and too

little with the Giver. It will help us both being here."

Alice was silent; she felt she did not understand. There seemed to be a something separating her from the husband by her side, and everything looked chill and dark. He had been showing her some parts of his beautiful native city, and speaking of the days when men, and women too, had counted the privilege of reading God's Word in their own language as dearer to them than their lives. "Let us turn back," she said presently; "I feel strangely tired."

That night there were touching sounds of joy and sorrow in Willie's old home. A young life was given, but the mother lay at the gates of the grave. They watched her tenderly, and prayer went up continually,—the husband pleading, though submissively, for natural life; but his parents' pleadings were deeper—they asked that she might know *Jesus*, whom to know is *life eternal*. Day and night their cry went up: "Take her not away, Lord, till Thou hast revealed *Thyself* to her." She was too ill to be spoken to, but they knew well that the shortest way to her heart was round by heaven.

Days, even weeks, went by, and she hovered between life and death. Then came a slight rallying, which very slowly increased. She had moaned continually, "I cannot die, I cannot die;" else of what was passing in her soul they knew nothing.

The first day she could speak again, she said to her mother-in-law, "Read — me — a — prayer — from — my — little — book — mother." But the mother said gently, "We will tell Him ourselves just what we want, dear child;" and by the sick-bed the aged believer poured forth in few and simple words her heart's desire, a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for that poor sick and weary one.

Her daughter-in-law lay with closed eyes as she ended, and she left her request with God.

After this, most days she read a verse or two, as she was able to bear it, to her, never wearying her, never going into explanations or long talkings, but just leaving the Word of God to do its own work.

Then came the parting between husband and wife: he was obliged to return to his occupation; and she, though out of immediate danger, was far too ill to travel, or even to leave her bed. It was with feelings little short of despair she said "Good-bye," for she had then no hope for this world or the next; and when he said, "The Lord who loves us both will care for you; and we have the joy of knowing for certain that our eternity is to be together with Him," she would not distress him by acknowledging she had not this joyful assurance; she only hid her head in the bedclothes, and wept.

Meantime the aged believers spoke to the Lord, and in confidence expected His answer, and waited for it. Three weeks more passed, and then the Lord took the little one to Himself. Alice's grief was terrible. She had been lifted into the adjoining room, to be present while the Word of God was read, and prayer offered, ere the little coffin with the precious remains of her babe was carried from the house. When all had gone, and she was left alone with her mother-in-law, her reserve gave way, and, putting her head on her shoulder, she said, "Mother, you will be with Jesus, and Willie, and my baby boy, but I shall be outside. Mother, I am lost." Very quiet was the answer: "I know it, my child; but Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He has been seeking, seeking you for long; now let Him save you."

"But you do not know, mother, how my life has been all a sham. I have professed to teach others what

I did not know myself. I have been at His table, and I did not know Him: have I not eaten and drunk damnation to myself?"

"Eternal damnation only follows the final rejection of Christ, the only Saviour: the apostle is speaking there of judgment and chastening *now*. I am not denying the sin, my child, of being there with a lie in one's mouth, professing to remember One whom we never knew; but sin now cannot shut you out from the Saviour. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance.'"

"But, mother, I do not know Him, and I cannot see Him. I cannot live like this, and I do not know how to die. How can I know Him? Oh, if I had lived in the days when He was on earth, I would have crawled to His feet, though I had died there."

The mother lifted up her heart to the Lord to teach this troubled soul Himself; then she said, "But, my child, you need take no toilsome journey to His blessed feet now: He is here in this room listening, waiting for you to accept what He offers,—pardon, salvation, peace, and Himself. '*Look unto Me and be ye saved*,' He says; and, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have *believed*.' It is not He who needs to be entreated to draw near to you. The Apostle Paul says, '*We pray you in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God.'"

"Oh, if I could hear Him say He forgives me, and that He would have me!"

"He speaks now by His Word, my child, and He says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise* cast out.' He

has purchased the right to say this to you, at the cost of His own life's blood. His death is the price at which you can have life; but the price *has been paid*, the ransom has been accepted. The sinner's substitute has risen from the dead, and made a 'new and living way' for you and me right home to God."

"Mother, pray," was all Alice answered. And the mother "went and told Jesus" all their wants.

After a time of quiet, Alice spoke again. "Mother, I see: my sham life, my religiousness, my dead works, my hollow prayers, all met by the cross,—all known to Him when He gave His life. I see God *is satisfied*: He wants nothing from me; I may rest in His arms."

Truly that day the Lord turned the house of mourning into one of praise.

It was months ere she was able to travel, and return with her husband to their London home. In them she learned much of the Lord Himself.

Let me close this narrative by stating that from her own lips I heard her story, not only as regards the conversations and doings of her husband's father and mother, told to me with many a detail not given here, but also as regards much that passed in her own soul of deep, dark agony, as she faced death for herself, and then again in what she loved better than herself. But out of death God brought life.

Dear unsaved reader, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart;" for "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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COMING TO CHRIST.



See page 3.

THE natural man is exceedingly perverse, and Satan knows how to wield this perversity of heart. We, in our day, are ready to excuse ourselves for our slowness to believe in the Lord Jesus, by saying, "How much easier it would have been, had we seen Him in the flesh, and been with Him when He wrought His gracious works, and when He spoke His

gracious words that were such as never man spake!" Now, in reality, they who then lived had by far the greater difficulties in the way of their faith. One whom no man honoured claims this service,—*"Follow Me."* One whom man despiseth says, *"I and the Father are one."* That rejected One, the bye-word among the people, stands in the temple and

cries, "If any man thirst, let him come *unto Me* and drink!" and promises, "He that believeth in *Me*, out of him shall flow rivers of living water!"

In those days, the difficulty felt by His hearers, and by His very disciples, was to believe without a doubt that *this was the right person*; this Jesus the real Immanuel, the Saviour of the world. To these men there seems never to have occurred the thought that there was difficulty *in the act of coming*, or in knowing *what coming to Him meant*; the difficulty they felt was the being sure that Jesus was the Christ. Only let that point be settled, and their souls are at rest.

Such was the state of things then. But now it is altered. Satan has shifted his ground, and tries to puzzle us with the questions, "*How are we to come?*" and "*What is meant by coming to Christ?*" We are in the habit of admitting that Christ's claims are beyond dispute; that He is God-man, and sent by the Father to be the propitiation for our sins. The reproach heaped on Him when first He came is so far rolled away, that all professing disciples agree in never doubting for a moment (as they suppose) that Christ, and no other, is the Saviour to whom they are to come. But then the natural heart finds out a new hindrance in the way of at once resting satisfied in Him. "What do you mean by *coming*?" is a question often asked and dwelt upon; and many a soul says, "If I only knew *how to come aright*, I would rejoice!"

Let us, then, ask what is the true state of the case—whether or not there be any barrier put in our way by this expression, "Come." Is it a mysterious act of the mind? Is it some very delicate feeling? Is it a great experience, or a high attainment, that must precede the enjoyment of Christ as ours?

In reply to such questions, I remark that nothing but a self-righteous tendency in the heart would ever have led us to mistake a matter which in itself is very simple. We repeat it—it is the self-righteousness of the natural man that leads him to think that there is anything perplexing in words which Christ thought so simple that He never once has given an explanation of them. For it is a fact, that just as our Master knew there was no need of explaining to any one what He meant when He said, "*Hearken!*" so did He consider "*Come!*" to be a term that needed no explanation. Any one that has an ear knows the former: why should any one who has a soul that can think and feel not know the latter? It is self-righteousness that entangles us here; it is a want of sufficient appreciation of Christ. The hesitation arises from our sight of what Christ is being still very dim; not attractive enough to fill our heart and conscience.

For, in truth, this "*Coming to Christ*" is simply the soul's state when occupied with thoughts about Christ, so occupied therewith as to have left behind it all other things. The soul in such a state of engrossment is said to have *come to Him*. It has no other whom it cares for, no other that fills up its desires, no other that meets its case; and so it has left all others for this One, and in doing so is said to have "*come to Him*." His person and work have met the cravings of both conscience and heart.

If you are at all troubled with this "Come," I do not hesitate to say that your eye is averted from its proper object. When Jesus says, "*Come unto Me*" (Matt. xi. 28), He never meant you to stop short at the first word; He meant you to put all the stress upon "*ME*." Indeed, He has used a form of expression that is purposely fitted to produce

this result ; for He has used a word for "*Come*" which is neither more nor less than "*This way*," or "*Hither*." He cries, "All ye that are heavy laden, leave off trying other means and try *Me*! *This way* to *Me*! *Hither* to *Me*!" It is thus that He speaks, putting the whole stress upon the "*Me*." "All ye that labour," says the gracious Master, "look *this way*! look *hither* to *Me*—to *Me*—to none other but to *Me*!"

It is the same word used, John xxi. 12, "Come and dine," where surely He meant not to say more or less than, "Leave off now your other engagements, and let us dine." It is the woman's word at Sychar, "Come, see a man that told me all" (iv. 29). It is the Master's word in the parable (Matt. xxii. 4), "Come to the marriage;" that is, "Let us off to the marriage! All is ready; away to this feast!" It is the angel's word at the tomb (Matt. xxviii. 6), "Come, see the place where the Lord lay;" that is, "Here is the spot, see for yourselves; this way, down here!" So that the emphasis all lies in the object presented to us; never in the act of our minds. But we, self-righteous as we are, would fain delay and linger, excusing ourselves by saying, "I do not know how to perform the act aright." The real truth, however, is that we are not quite satisfied, or perhaps not *very fully occupied*, with the object. We would not thus tarry on our own feelings, and acts, and states of mind, were we very fully engrossed with the Christ who is set before us, and who stands in the abundance of His grace beckoning us to advance and enjoy infinite love: *This way*, O sinner! *this way*! To *Me*, and to no other!"

Yes, this is all. He beckons you to *Himself*! Why turn in your eye on yourself? why gaze on your wounds? why gaze on your temptations? why look at waves and listen to winds? The Master cries, "To

Me, to *Me*." He says, O soul, up! forsake *your* schemes, *your* thoughts, *your* ways, and away at once to *Me*! O precious soul! do not be detained by inquiries into the acts of your mind, but at once think of *Me*; *Me*, whom the Father sent to save sinners, even the chief; *Me*, who came to seek and save the lost; *Me*, whom the Spirit delighteth to glorify; *Me*, who have satisfied the law, who My own self bare your sins in My own body on the tree; *Me*, who have done all that a sinner needs for righteousness; *Me*, who am come to give you Myself, with all I have done and suffered, to be your ransom. Take *Me* for your conscience; take *Me* for your heart.

The case might be stated thus: When I, a sinner, am brought to be willing that Christ should come to me and give me all I need, this is my soul's coming to Christ. My coming to Christ is, in other words, my soul *satisfied with His coming to me*! When my soul is letting alone and forsaking other things, because *taken up with Christ's coming out of the Father's bosom* to save sinners; this is my soul's coming to Christ! My conscience was asking, "Wherewithal shall I come before God?" Shall it be by bringing rivers of oil? Shall it be by offering my soul's sorrow and bitterest grief, as well as my body's penance? I find that it is not thus; nor yet by my prayers, nor by the aid of any creature's merit, nor by anything that is not to be found in Christ. *What is in Christ* is all that my soul needs. Perplexed soul, the Holy Spirit brings all such difficulties as yours to an end by fixing the attention and staying the mind upon this glorious truth, viz. that Christ, "His own self" (1 Peter ii. 24), is the only atonement for sin, the only propitiation. Do think of Christ, His person, His heart of love, His words of grace, and all this in connection with His finished work, His sacrifice accepted; and while

thus engaged, "ere ever you are aware, your soul shall be as the chariots of Ammi-nadib."

Most blessed word, "Come!" only remember it is not itself Christ, but only His kind voice drawing off my attention from other objects. It is not the sacrifice, but it is the silver trumpet summoning me to the sacrifice. Blessed word, "Come," for, instead of the tremendous "Depart!" of the judgment-day, spoken to rejecting and rejected sinners, it sends forth the proclamation of the gate still open, the heart of God open, for me a sinner.

But perhaps you object—"Surely I have something to do; for does He not go on to say, '*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls*?' " (Matt. xi. 29). Yes, He does, but He does not say that this taking on of His yoke is the same as *coming to Him*. Far otherwise: it is what follows upon your coming to Him; it is *the service* you engage in *after having come to Him*. You come to Him at once, and find rest at once; and on the spot He makes your soul as white as snow: and then, the next step is your drawing His plough, "taking on His yoke." In thus serving and "learning of Him," you get *another rest*, viz. rest from former corruptions, passions, unholy impulses, tormenting desires. This *second* rest is the rest of Sanctification, and is not to be confounded with the *first* rest, which is that of Justification.

At once, then, fellow-sinner, hasten to Him. All you need is here. Here is full salvation; for He says, "All

things are delivered unto Me of My Father. Here is free salvation; for the Father reveals it to whom He will, and nothing whatsoever in the sinner can be a barrier to Him. It is a salvation all plain; for "He reveals it unto babes. It is a salvation all for sinners; for the persons invited are "*heavy-laden ones*," persons who have a load of sin, whether they feel it little or much or not at all; and "*labouring*," that is, trying in vain to save themselves, trying in vain to swim to shore.

Surely, then, I and Christ must meet. Why should we not? He beckons me off self and all else, and says, "*To Me, to Me alone!*" This day, then, let it be so! Father, I see Thee pointing me away from ordinances, from the Bible, from my faith, as well as from my unbelief, to *Christ alone*, that I and He may meet! the *sinner* and the *Saviour*! no one between! Jesus, Master, in *Thee*, in *Thee*, is peace! Holy Spirit, Thou hast bathed my weary soul! And here I rest, until the day arrive when I shall hear Him say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." I get *rest* the moment I come to Him. I get *rest* again when I become somewhat like Him, and the troubled sea of my passions sinks into a calm. I shall get a third *rest* when I die in the Lord (Rev. xiv. 13); and soon I shall enter on the final *rest* that remains for the people of God, when He to whom I now come shall come from heaven to glorify all who here came to Him (2 Thess. i. 7.)

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LONELY AND LOVELESS;

OR, ONLY A "FEW WORDS."



Does the reader know what it is to feel drawn to speak to some one whom he passes in the street, one who looks ill or in trouble, or who, in some way we cannot describe, seems to silently appeal to us for sympathy? It was a feeling such as this which led me to pause one morning in early spring, some few years ago, and speak to an elderly man, who was walking slowly in the sunshine in a street which, at that hour of the day, often appeared deserted.

"You seem to be in suffering," I said, reading a record of continued

pain of some sort in the drawn look of the otherwise placid-looking face.

"It's my cough, ma'am. It is not often I am free from it for five minutes together, otherwise I am fairly well, I thank you;" and a pair of soft brown eyes looked full of kindly feeling in thanks for the notice I had taken.

The voice was gentle and refined; the old man's manner was most courtly. I ventured to express some sympathy with him in his suffering, and asked if he had recently come to stay or live in the town.

"I have been here about six months now," he replied.

"Where do you live?" I asked, drawn more and more to this gentle-mannered stranger.

"Only a few steps from here, ma'am," he replied, adding warmly, "Will you honour me by stepping up into my cabin?"

I was glad to accept the invitation, and followed the old man, as, a minute or two afterwards, he turned into a narrow passage, and then, opening a door, he ascended a steep, narrow staircase, which led to a low room about eight feet square.

"There, this is my cabin!" said the old man, sitting down, somewhat exhausted after his climb.

"I perceive that you have been a seafaring man," I said, noticing the way he had of calling the room his cabin.

"Yes," he answered briefly, and a sadder look came over his face than any I had seen before.

"Are you quite alone in the world?" I asked.

"Yes, quite alone," he said, and the tears came into his eyes. "Once I had a wife and children to love me, but my wife is dead, and—and the children are estranged from their old father. I'm lonely and loveless, lonely and loveless!"

The gentle voice of the old man seemed to get into a weary wail as

he said this. It was like the distant moaning of the wind on a dark winter's night, something that seemed strangely sad. I had some difficulty in keeping back my tears, for my own glad, love-filled life came up before me, making the old man's lot appear all the more dreary and desolate by the contrast.

"Do you remember what David said in one of his psalms—'He setteth the solitary in families'?" I asked, reaching forward to get a Bible I saw lying with other books upon the little table which stood beneath the window.

The old man shook his head. "It's not that I don't read the Bible," he said somewhat plaintively. "I am hungry for the comfort I know others find there, but it has not come to me."

Here, then, was the reason for the sympathy I had felt for this poor, lone stranger. Perhaps my heavenly Master had sent me with a message of love to cheer him in his loneliness, and to bring him comfort in that hour when, though even blessed with many friends, man must yet go forth *alone* to die. Oh, how well do I remember that, our first, talk together of God's goodness and love. I read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, and he made me read and re-read the verse, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"I never felt the sweetness of that verse before," he said tearfully; "it's the love in it which seems to rest me so!"

After a little further talk I sang to him. The hymn was full of love.

Then we knelt in prayer; and by and by, when I left my new friend, he said, smiling through his tears, "This has been a day of days to me. May God often send such visitors to my little cabin."

And this was the beginning of my friendship with dear old Joseph M'Phearson. Twice a week at least I visited his little "cabin," and never did I go at an expected time without finding the Bible lying ready opened for me on the table. No longer a "sealed" book to him, the old man was daily deriving more and more comfort from its pages. At first it was a little difficult for him to feel that his respectable and moral life in the past was in no sense a help to him in getting God's pardon for sin. He had thought that because his life had not been so dark as the lives which some had lived, he had a *claim* upon God's pardon; and because his life had been so suffering, he had a *right* to God's special favour. But one day, after drawing his attention to a few passages such as these—

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ;"

"The thought of foolishness is sin ;"

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

"For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ;"

—light seemed to break in upon his mind.

"Ah!" he said musingly, "it's only by taking my place as a *sinner* that I can be saved! My own respectability and goodness, which I've been proud to boast about, can't *save* me, but they can lose me the salvation I want, because, while I take them into account, I'm loath to regard myself as a needy sinner." Then, going down upon his knees, he exclaimed, "O Lord, tear to shreds, I beseech Thee, this pitiable garment of self-righteousness, strip me of my own contemptible self, and thus make me feel my need to be clothed alone and entirely in the righteousness of Christ."

After that I heard no more of what he had done in his life, but I heard much of what he now saw he had left undone, and often he spoke

of himself as the very chiefest of sinners, and I felt to him the words had deepest meaning. And now he began to lose that weary, suffering look which I had noticed so much the first time I saw him, nor did he speak of himself as lonely and unloved. Whatever the history of the past had been, as regarded his own children, he never alluded to it.

The summer following that spring seemed to be much shorter than usual. It was late in beginning and early in closing, a cold, wet autumn setting in at the commencement of September. My poor old friend felt the change. His cough became so troublesome that soon he had to give up going to church altogether; then he kept more and more to the house; and lastly, I had to prevail upon him to engage the services of a woman, who lived near, to come and attend to the little "cabin," which up to that time he had looked after entirely himself. Little by little he gave in, until at last he kept his bed, too weak to rise. It was then that I urged upon him the need of writing to his children; and oh, that those children could have seen the father's face as he said gently—

"I would have written before, but I couldn't pen a stroke for the great longing I have to see them, and the feeling of love which goes out towards them!"

"May I write?" I asked, and he readily consented. I wrote briefly, saying how ill the old man was, and urging son and daughter—the only two living ones out of what had been a large family—to lose no time in coming. Most eagerly each morning after sending the letter would old M'Phearson greet me with the words—

"Has the answer come yet?"

Within the week the reply came. A cold, stern letter from the son; one less cold, but in proportion greater in severity, from the daughter. The

son was too much engaged to spare the time; the daughter had a friend visiting her, and could not leave home: and both hinted at "a few words" which had separated them from their father for so many years, and asked that *he* should apologise to them if he wished to make it up.

Oh that the two who had written such cruel, heart-breaking words to the dying father could have been near to watch his face as I broke the news to him of their determination not to come! His pale cheek flushed and his eyes filled with tears, but his voice was full of gentleness and touching sweetness as he said—

"Write back to them, 'God bless them both!' and tell them God has filled their father's heart too full of love to let him murmur. Tell them my heart brims over with love; and though to-day they do not care for it, some day they may be glad to remember that their dying father's thought of them was one so full of love that even their coldness grew warm as it touched it!"

He did not die away from all his friends. Other relatives came and tended him gently in his last hours. And though his suffering at times was very great, no murmur ever escaped his lips. A quiet, sweet joy and thankfulness seemed to fill his heart, and when he spoke, it was to praise God for all His love, and for His great goodness in giving him that which made death seem to him more bright than life. Some of his last words were—"I see every day more and more my sinfulness, but God seems to set alongside of it this—

'Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;' 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' Thank God I'm a sinner!"

I thought, as I stood beside him in the last moments of life, how terrible the power of "a few words" of anger, if because of such, in an hour like this, a father was to be deserted by his children; and then I wondered if at any time in any life the "few words" could take place without direful hurt? I longed at that moment to gather together the careless and thoughtless sons and daughters of every home in the land, and to implore them to take care of the "few words," which at the time might seem as nothing, but which can live in after years, and fill with sorrow the lives it is the children's happy privilege to bless. Hasty words, unkind speeches, needless criticisms, these live on in the heart when those who uttered them are far away. Oh, if sons and daughters would store their minds with happy memories, and fill their lives with a sweetness which shall gladden and comfort them in the days of their own old age, let them be most jealously careful to say nothing but what is kind and loving to the "old folks at home." Let provocation be met by forbearance, supposed interference by patient hearing, and many of the heart-burnings which creep into the otherwise happy homes and families, and which often lead to coldness and estrangement, would cease to be possible.

—From "Strange Tales," by permission.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1894.

SAVED BY A LOOK.



SOME time ago a woman came to thank me for saving her in the darkest hour of her life from a great sin. I had never seen her before, so that her first words filled me with surprise. She had been in sore trouble. That trouble had grown upon her until it seemed unbearable. She could see no relief, no way of escape from its intolerable pressure. Temptation always comes to us in our weakest moments, even as it did to our Lord, and it came to her with a force she felt incapable of resisting. She would end it all and have done with it for ever. She sat in her chair beside a bare table, and, with her head in her hands, thought of the terrible purpose she had formed. After a while she lifted her face, and her eye rested upon a copy of *The Christian*, and upon a single

sentence in a corner of the page. It was this—"God's loaf has no undercrust." I had said this somewhere in a sermon, and by the will of God it had got into the paper. When she saw it, she stared at it again and again, and said, "*God's loaf has no undercrust.*" Then I have not got to the bottom or end of His love yet. There is something for me still. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." In an agony of penitence she fell upon her knees and prayed for forgiveness, and, with a new hope in her soul, asked God to help her in her distress. It came almost immediately, and she passed from despair to gladness. Feeling grateful for my simple words, she came to find me out and thank me, and I could not but praise God for using me through His grace in saving a soul from death.

Since then I have often thought how many could be saved from sorrow or from death, by a believing glance at the Word of God. The trouble about our troubles is, that we look at them until they blind us to everything else, and almost make us incapable of seeing God. We look at them, and by looking they grow into a great mountain, or a dead wall right in front of us. We can neither scale the mountain nor break through the wall. Then we despair. If we would only look straight away from them to the promises of the Lord, we should find the promises more real than the cares of which we are so much afraid—God is greater than our burden always, and will help us as readily as a father will relieve his child who is carrying a load too great for his strength. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." To

put it in another form: "No trial has come upon you beyond man's power to bear, and God is faithful to His promises, and will not suffer you to be tried beyond your strength, but will with every trial provide the way of escape, that you may be able to sustain it."

Are you in trouble, and can see no way out? Glance at these wonderful words of hope with a believing heart, and you shall be saved—What you cannot see, God can. He knows the way which you should take, and if you ask Him, He will show you.

"O there is never a sorrow of heart
That will lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn and ask
Of Him to be our Friend."

Turn to God—ask of Him—There is the secret of it all. It is impossible for God to lie. He never made a promise yet for the purpose of breaking it. He made His promises that He might have the joy of fulfilling them. He saw that you were coming to a crisis in life long before you had any thought of it, and has all the while been prepared to hear and answer your cry. Let the hour of your distress be the time of your prayer, and it will become the season of God's deliverance. From a deep experience I have always found an angel in Gethsemane, a Saviour in the storm, a Healer when the fever was at its worst, a Deliverer when the Red Sea, the mountains, and the Egyptians environed me. Claim the promise of your God—pray, pray, pray; and after praying you will find good cause for singing. If you pray without ceasing, God will help you without ceasing. I know your burden is large, but I am not mocking you with useless counsel. What God has done for me, is always my reason for urging others to venture wholly on His love. It does not matter who may come and say—"There is nothing in prayer. It will do no good. It is wasted

breath. It is impossible for God to be moved by the cry of a soul in pain." My answer is simply—"I have found something in prayer which I have found in nothing else. It has brought me untold good. He has heard the crying of my soul when no other could or would hear me." He answered me in the day that I cried unto Him.

Go with your weight of care, distress, temptation, and trial into His presence, and you will return and say that I had not told you the half of the tender mercy of our Lord.

But the greatest burden a man can have upon him is his sin. It galls him to the very soul. It well-nigh crushes the life out of him. And one terrible part of his trouble often is that he cannot see where he can look for deliverance. John Bunyan says when he watched Christian trying to flee from the City of Destruction—"I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run, yet he stood still because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go."

Who does know where to go when the sense of his sin and the fear of its consequences are upon him? He tries everywhere, and always fails. There is nothing for him to do but to try Jesus Christ—there is no salvation in any other—there is no salvation in himself. He may writhe in agony under his load, and cry—"Who shall deliver me from this body of death—this foul, corrupted, corrupting burden which I bear about with me wherever I go?"

And there will be no answer until he looks Godward. Who shall deliver him? God! He will give him the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. If a man will look to Jesus Christ, he shall be saved, and saved at once. A believing glance at the cross, at the sacrifice for sin, will bring immediate redemption. Again

we base the argument for deliverance upon the unfailing promises of God—His word is as full of promises to save as a flower is full of colour. All the way through He stands with open arms proclaiming forgiveness to the sinner. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions." "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

If you are truly in earnest to be relieved of your burden, you will find the immutable promises of God facing you throughout His Word. Claim their fulfilment in the spirit and act of true repentance and faith. "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God." And He will answer you speedily. Remember, too, for your encouragement in seeking salvation, the numberless souls who have been forgiven and made "white in the blood of the Lamb." Out of the vast host of the redeemed, who have lived in purity on earth, who have struggled victoriously against sin, who have done the will of God amongst their fellow-men, there is not one who did not have the same experience you are having. They felt their burden as you are feeling yours. Many of them perhaps more keenly and terribly than you do yours. Yet they found the peace of God—they escaped His wrath—they received His mercy; and to the crucified Christ they ascribe the glory of their redemption. From the hour of their conversion to the moment of their death, they owed all to Him and to no other.

"I ask them whence their victory came,
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb
Their triumph to His death."

Look away from your sins to the Saviour. Looking on them and weeping over them will never remove them. They are never washed

away by tears, but only by blood. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." To look at his wounds on a battlefield will only add to the terribleness of the wounded man's condition. Let him look to the physician and put himself completely in his hands.

Your only way of escape is by the Lord Jesus: look away from your sins to Him, and He will save. When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, there was but one remedy, and that was to turn from the fang marks in their flesh and look to the brazen serpent. When they did that, they were immediately healed.

If in this moment of mercy you will turn your soul to Him who died for you, God will answer your prayer, and you will become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

After this great joy comes to you, there is nothing more to do than to *keep looking* to the Lord Jesus. Look to Him to deliver you in the hour of temptation. He can and will always come in to your rescue. He will stand at your right hand and will help. All the saints that ever lived attribute their victory in the peril hour to the grace of the Lord Jesus. They cried unto Him in their trouble, "Lord help me!" and He helped them. Look to Him always for guidance in your Christian work. The servant can have no better director in duty than the master. Look to Christ, He is your Master. In Edinburgh, some years ago, there lived a specialist for a certain disease. This disease necessitated generally

an operation. The specialist seldom operated himself. He left that to his son, but he was always present watching the actual operation, and the son took his instructions from watching his father's eye. So you must keep looking to the Lord Jesus for the indications of His will. He has promised—"I will guide thee with Mine eye."

Keep looking to Jesus. Look on His character, His life, His work, and you shall be changed to the same image. We are transformed by looking. If we always look on what is evil and deformed, we become like what we see; and it is the same if we look on what is beautiful. As the old saying goes, We are part of all that we have seen. It has been told that for many and many years a monk spent all his days in looking at a beautiful picture of Christ in one of the Continental art galleries. He was always fixing his gaze on the face before him; and it is told by those who watched him, that, as time went on, through the intensity of his devotion, his own face became like that on which he set his eyes so constantly. He was changed to the same image. Keep looking to the Author and Finisher of your faith. You will be saved in the time of temptation, and your life day by day will become more like His in beauty and power.

We are saved first by looking to Christ, then saved in all hours of temptation, and saved at last by looking to Him in the hour of death. Look and live.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1894.

OLD TOM'S STORY; TOLD ON THE YORKSHIRE MOORS.



THERE was a talk in the village that some folks called Methodists were coming to preach to us; and come they did, and a warm reception we gave them.

It was on a Sunday, that about six strangers came in the afternoon into the village. They began by singing a hymn. At first things were pretty

quiet; but after nearly all the village had turned out to see what those fellows meant, the mischief began. We sodded them, we stoned them, we ducked two in the horse-pond, we tore their coats to shreds, and we thrashed them within an inch of their lives. We followed them out of the village, threatening that if

ever they came again we'd murder them. Well, in spite of all our threats and ill-treatment, if these men didn't come as bold as lions the very next Sunday!

There were some who, whilst they hadn't a bit of sympathy with canting and preaching, nevertheless liked the pluck that these men displayed. So they called out for fair play for them. For myself, I wouldn't stop to listen to any of their "old woman's talk."

The preaching that day did what one of the Apostle Paul's sermons effected—some "believed," some laughed, but the main part of them said, "We will hear thee again concerning this matter." Well, God carried on His work in His own way. The "Cross" hadn't lost a bit of its power. Even some of my companions left the ale-house, and gave up the cards, and, folks said, began to pray. Mind you, "these turncoats," as we called them, had pretty hard times of it. We didn't let them alone; but, in spite of all we could either do or say, they stood fast, and the firmer they stood, and the quieter they took our rough dealings, the more did I hate them. Little did I think that the day wasn't far off when I should be on their side. Blessed be God, He didn't leave me, as He might have done, wholly in the hands of the evil one.

It came about thus: To the surprise of everybody, but mostly to my own surprise, my wife, I heard, was touched with this new fancy. If I was sure of one thing more than another, I was sure of my wife's love, but I had yet to learn that she could love somebody more than she loved me. Yes, lads! she loved Christ more than she loved me; and I believe if I'd killed her ten times over, I couldn't have altered her. Bad man as I was, I couldn't but see my wife had the best of it. God helped her, and she conquered me by

her religion. For I remember one night, after thinking of all my treatment to her till I fairly trembled, how I made up my mind that I'd let her go her own gate, and take her own way. When I told her this, she was sitting opposite me by the fireside; the bairns were in bed; we hadn't lit the candle yet, and the firelight flickered and played over the house, as clean as a new pin; and, I remember, scarcely had the words crossed my lips afore she was on her knees before me, and after one great sob of thanksgiving to God for, as she said, so far answering prayer, she looked right up into my face with her own beautiful blue eyes (ah! I'd filled them many a time with tears), and she just asked this—"Tom, my lad, dost thou think that I can take my own way to heaven, and let thee take thy way to hell?" She didn't say a word more, but she cried as if her very heart would break, at the bare thought of some day being separated from me.

What she said that night about our going different roads, went like an arrow into me. It worked and worked, for, do what I would, I couldn't get rid of those words. At last I went to hear one of these men preach. It only made matters worse. If I was miserable before, I was a hundred times more miserable now. God had opened my eyes, but as yet I'd only seen myself; I hadn't seen Him a bit. I felt that if ever on this earth there stood a lost man, it was I. Do what I would, go where I would, it seemed as if the pit were about to open and swallow me up. There was naught behind me but a wasted life, and naught before me but a fearful judgment. It got at last that I felt that I couldn't bide it much longer. I should either go mad, or die, or make away with myself. I didn't much care which. Thank God, light came at last, and I saw Him. It was up

at the meeting-house ; one of them had been preaching about Christ weeping over Jerusalem, and that broke my heart. I felt how He must have loved them, and then I learnt that He loved me too. When I left that place late that night, it seemed as if I trod on air. I shouted, I sang, I glorified God. I had to pass the master's house as I went home : how I did make the echoes ring !

The master had some gentlemen staying with him at this time. It appears that, as I went home, I woke one of them, who recognised my voice. Next morning he asked the master if "old Tom" ever got drunk, for he was sure I must have been drunk the night previous. Master told him that he was certain I hadn't got drunk, but what was a deal likelier (for he'd noticed my conduct of late), I'd been up, as he said, to the meeting-house, and got my brain turned, and had gone wrong in my head. After this he'd many a sly laugh at "old Tom." As you may judge, from being anxious about my own soul, I became anxious about his. He had everything but that one thing which in the eye of God is needful. Many a time, when the machinery had stopped, and everything was as still as death, I crept away into that great mill to pray for him. Don't think that I went about praying to God, and yet never opened my lips to the master himself about these things. Many a time, when I've caught him alone, did I plead with him to trust the same Saviour that I had learnt to love. He let me talk as much as ever I liked, and he only laughed—such a quiet, mocking, unbelieving laugh ! He used to say, "Come, come, Tom, my lad ; it's all right for you, if you believe these things, and I am glad if they make you any happier, but they're nothing in my line, Tom."

Things went on in this way for

many a long bit ; I did all I could to commend religion to the master by living as "becometh the gospel" ; then I learned to leave things with God, knowing that His time is always the best time.

One morning I was told that there was trouble at the Grange. The master had been taken suddenly ill, and the doctors pronounced his life to be in imminent danger. How I got through that day's work I'm sure I don't know. My heart was at the bedside of the sick man every minute. We had heard only one tale all the day—that he grew worse and worse every hour. About twelve o'clock that night there came a low knock at the house door. It was a servant from the Grange to say that the master was dying, and he wanted to see "old Tom." Oh, lads ! his gay companions, his midsummer friends, could do him no good then. A house with death coming through the door was no place for them. They'd left him in the morning, and left him alone ; he didn't want them ; no, thank God, he wanted "old Tom." I was soon dressed and up at the Grange. They showed me into the master's bedroom, and left us alone together. When I went up to him, he took both my hands in his, and though his lip quivered, and his breast heaved, he never spoke a word. I don't know how long this lasted, but when he'd grown a bit calm, he said, "Tom !"—and his words came faintly, and as if with pain,—“Tom ! I'm very ill. They say I'm dying, Tom ! I believe I am. I'm drifting fast from the moorings here.”

Still keeping hold of his hand, I said, "Master, don't say drifting ; there's some one, I hope, guiding the vessel."

He shook his head, and with all the bitterness gone, but with all the unbelief remaining, he said, "No, Tom ; I'm drifting out into the ocean

without light, without chart, alone, and all so dark."

He seemed troubled, for his lip quivered again; and although he didn't shed a tear, there came up out of his heart a sob that can only come when a man is in more than mortal anguish. "Have you prayed, master?" said I; for I didn't know what to say. I was almost in as sore strait as he, and I added, "Oh, master, if you are dying, are you ready for it?"

He shook his head, and answered, "No, Tom, I'm not ready; I haven't prayed. I don't know, Tom, if there is a God; but if there is, I don't think He'd hear a prayer from me. I've been led to doubt, and doubt, until it seems I doubt everything. No, Tom, I don't think God would hear me."

"Don't say so," said I. "Oh, master, you know what I was years ago—a Sabbath-breaker, a drunkard, a blasphemer, the chief of sinners; and God heard me, even me. I didn't know it then, I know it now, that He loved me, and had mercy on me, in spite of all my sin and wickedness." And then I told him my Saviour loved him, was willing to show him mercy, and that He was able to save to the uttermost all who trust in Him. He lay still. I saw he was suffering, but thinking, too, and all he said at last was, "Oh that I could believe this! Oh, Tom, my lad, if all this were true!"

I couldn't stand any more. I dropped down on my knees. "Shall I pray, master?" I said. "Yes, Tom, pray for me, please," he answered; and I did pray. I felt

that I had hold of God. I used His own words, His promises, His faithfulness, everything I could think of, on behalf of my poor, unbelieving, dying master. And as I prayed I could tell by his clutch on my hand, not strong, but nervous, that every word of my prayer went not only straight up to God, but went to that man's heart. I spoke the words, but I'm sure it was his prayer. When I'd done I rose to go, and now it was his turn. Quietly he sobbed like a child, drew me to him, leaned his head on my shoulder, thanked me for what he called my love to him, then thanked me more for the comfort I'd been to him that hour.

I was with him when he died. He lingered until the next evening, and then the summons came; but, glory be to God! I believe my master was saved. His last words were words of trust in Christ Jesus; and when he was too weak to speak, and I bent down and asked him if he had light, he smiled, his countenance for a moment lighted up with joy, he bowed his head, and almost as if in the effort of speaking he passed away. And, lads, I feel sure he didn't drift out into the ocean in darkness, and alone; but that the Lord was with him, now to be his eternal guide and light.

"Old Tom" was ninety years of age last Michaelmas. I don't think I shall be here long. I'm waiting for the Lord to come any day, and am looking forward to see my wife, who prayed so much for me, and to see the master, who sent for "old Tom" when he came to die.

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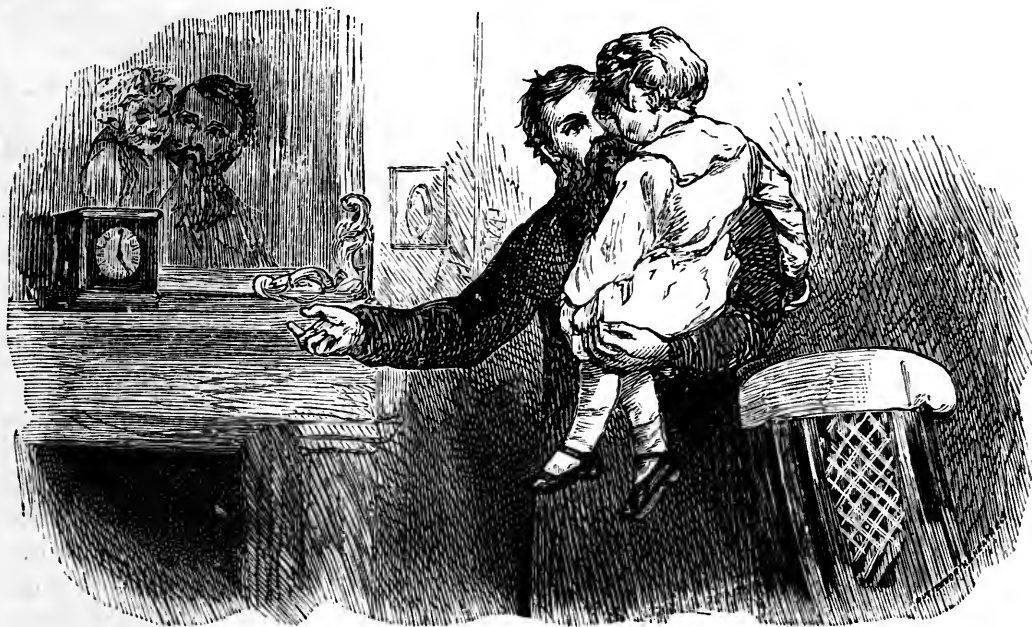
MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1894.

"THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE."

"There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—
ROM. iii. 22, 23.

By D. L. MOODY.



See page 3.

THAT is one of the hardest truths man has to learn. We are apt to think that we are just a little better than our neighbours; and if we find they are a little better than ourselves, we go to work and try to pull them down to our level. If you want to find out who and what man is, go to the third chapter of Romans, and there the whole story is told: "There is none righteous, no, not one." "All have sinned, and come short." *All.* Some men like to

have their lives written before they die. If any of you would like to read your biography, turn to this chapter, and you will find it already written.

I can imagine some one saying, "I wonder if he really pretends to say that 'there is no difference.'" The teetotaller says, "Am I no better than the drunkard?" Well, I want to say here that it is a good deal better to be temperate than intemperate; a good deal better to be honest than dishonest. It is better for a man to be upright in all his transactions, than to cheat right and left, even in this life. But when it comes to the great question of salvation, that does not touch the question at all, because "all have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God." Men are all bad by nature; the old Adam-stock is bad; and we cannot bring forth good fruit until we are grafted into the one True Vine. If I have a garden, and two apple trees in it, which both bear some bitter apples, perfectly worthless, does it make any difference to me that the one tree has got perhaps five hundred apples, all bad, and the other only two, both bad? There is no difference; only one tree has more fruit than the other. But it is all *bad*. So it is with man. One thinks he has got only one or two very little sins—God won't notice that; why, that other man has broken every one of the ten commandments! No matter, there is no difference; they are both guilty; both have broken the law.

The law demands complete and perfect fulfilment; and if you cannot do that, you are lost, as far as the law is concerned. "*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*" (Jas. ii. 10). Suppose you were to hang up a man to the roof with a chain of ten links; if one were to break, does it matter that the other nine are all sound and whole? Not the least. One link breaks, and down comes the man. But is it not rather hard that he should fall when the other nine are perfect, when only one is

broken? Why, of course not; if one is broken, it is just the same to the man as if all had been broken: he falls. So the man who breaks one commandment is guilty of all. He is a criminal in God's sight. Look at yonder prison, with its thousand prisoners. Some are there for murder, some for stealing, some for forgery, some for one thing, and some for another. You may classify them, but every man is a *criminal*. They have all broken the law, and they are all paying the penalty. So the law has brought every man in a criminal in the sight of God. If a man should advertise that he could take a correct photograph of people's hearts, do you believe he would find a customer? We go to have our faces taken, and if the artist flatters us, we say, "Oh yes, that's a first-rate likeness," as we pass it round among our friends. But let the real man be brought out,—the photograph of the heart,—and see if a man will pass that round among his neighbours. Why, you would not want your own wife to see it! You would be frightened even to look at it yourself. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" We do not know our own hearts; none of us have any idea how bad they are. Some bitter things are written against me, but I know a good many more things about myself that are bad than any other man. There is nothing good in the old Adam nature. We have got a heart in rebellion against God by nature, and we do not even love God unless we are born of the Spirit. I can understand why men do not like this third chapter of Romans—it is too strong for them. It speaks the truth too plainly. But just because we do not like it we shall be all the better for having a look at it; very likely we shall find that it is exactly what we want, after all. Here is a man who thinks he is not just so bad as it makes him out to be. He is sure he is a little better than his

neighbour next door. Why, he goes to church regularly, and his neighbour never goes to church at all! "Of course," he congratulates himself, "I'll certainly get saved easier." But there is no use trying to evade it. God has given us the law to measure ourselves by, and by this most perfect rule "we have all sinned, and come short," and "there is no difference."

Paul brings in the law to show man that he is lost and ruined. God, being a perfect God, had to give a perfect law, and the law was given not to save men, but to measure them by. I want you to understand this clearly, because I believe hundreds and thousands stumble here. They try to save themselves by trying to keep the law; but the law has never saved a single man since the world began. Men have been trying to keep it, but they have never succeeded, and never will. Ask Paul what it was given for. Here is his answer: "That every mouth might be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). In this third chapter of Romans the world has been put on its trial, and found guilty. The verdict has been brought in against us all—these ministers, and elders, and church members, just as truly as the prodigal and the drunkard—"All have sinned, and come short." The law stops every man's mouth.

I said to my little family one morning, a few weeks before the Chicago fire, "I am coming home this afternoon to give you a ride." My little boy clapped his hands. "Oh, papa, will you take me to see the bears in Lincoln Park?" "Yes."—You know boys are very fond of seeing bears. I had not been gone long when my little boy said, "Mamma, I wish you would get me ready." "Oh," she said, "it will be a long time before papa comes." "But I want to get ready, mamma." At last he was ready to have the ride,—face washed, and clothes all nice and clean. "Now, you must take good

care and not get yourself dirty again," said mamma. Oh, of course he was going to take care; he wasn't going to get dirty. So off he ran to watch for me. However, it was a long time yet until the afternoon, and after a little he began to play. When I got home, I found him outside, with his face all covered with dirt. "I can't take you to the Park that way, Willie." "Why, papa? You said you would take me." "Ah, but I can't: you're all over mud. I couldn't be seen with such a dirty little boy." "Why, I'se clean, papa; mamma washed me." "Well, you've got dirty since." But he began to cry, and I could not convince him that he was dirty. "I'se clean; mamma washed me!" he cried. Do you think I argued with him? No. I just took him up in my arms, and carried him into the house, and showed him his face in the looking-glass. He had not a word to say. He could not take my word for it, but one look at the glass was enough; he saw it for himself. He didn't say he wasn't dirty after that!

Now the looking-glass showed him that his face was dirty. *But I did not take the looking-glass to wash it; of course not.* Yet that is just what thousands of people do. The law is the looking-glass to see ourselves in, to show us how vile and worthless we are in the sight of God; but they take the law, and try to *wash* themselves with it! Man has been trying that for six thousand years, and has miserably failed. *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.* Only one man ever lived on the earth who could say he had kept the law, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. If He had committed one sin, and come short in the smallest degree, His offering Himself for us would have been useless. But men have tried to do what He did, and have failed. Instead of sheltering under His righteousness, they have offered God their own. And God knew what a miserable failure it

would be. "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii. 10).

"Then is there any hope for me?" you say. "What is to become of me? If all this is true, I am a poor lost soul. I have committed sin from my earliest childhood." Thank God, my friends, this is just where the gospel comes in. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord *hath laid* on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 5, 6).

You ask me what my hope is; it is, that Christ died for my sins, in my stead, in my place, and therefore I can enter into life eternal. You ask Paul what his hope was. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). This is the hope in which died all the glorious martyrs of old. Take that doctrine of *substitution* out of the Bible, and my hope is lost. With the law, without Christ, we are all undone. The law we have broken, and it can only hang over our head the sharp sword of justice. Even if we could keep it from this moment, there remains the unforgiven past. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

He only is safe for eternity who is sheltered behind the finished work of Christ. What the law could not do for us, He does. He obeyed it to the very letter, and under His obedience we can take our stand. For us He

has suffered all its penalties, and paid all that the law demands. "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

I have been trying to tell you the old, old story that men are sinners. I may be speaking to some one, perhaps, who thinks it a waste of time. "God knows I'm a sinner," he cries; "you don't need to prove it." Well, my friend, I have good news for you. It is just as easy for God to save you, who have broken the whole ten commandments, as the man who has only broken one of them. Both are dead—dead in sins. It is no matter how *dead* you are, or how long you have been dead; Christ can bring you to life just the same. *There is no difference.* When Christ met that poor widow coming out of Nain, following the body of her boy to the grave,—he was just newly dead,—His loving heart could not pass her; He stopped the funeral, and bade the dead arise. And when Jesus stood by the grave of Lazarus, who had been dead *four days*, was it not just as easy for Him to say, "Lazarus, come forth?" Yes, it was just as easy; there was no difference. They were both alike dead, and Christ saved the one just as easily, and as willingly, and as lovingly, as the other. And therefore, my friend, you need not complain that Christ cannot save you. Christ died *for the ungodly*. And if you turn to Him at this moment with an honest heart, and receive Him simply as your Saviour and your God, I have the authority of His word for telling you (John vi. 37) that He will *in no wise cast out*.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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THE CONVERTED INFIDEL.



See page 3.

"YOUR husband, I understand, is very ill," the missionary said, as he knocked at a door one day in H—— Street, where he had heard that a professed infidel was very sick; "I am anxious to see him." Shutting the door with violence, the woman hastened to a neighbour's house. Mr. P——, however, went in, and

found the man in bed, reading the newspaper.

"What do you want?" said he, in a surly and somewhat sneering tone.

"You and I are strangers," replied Mr. P—— mildly, "but I hope we'll not be long so. I'm a missionary; and as I was just visiting the neigh-

bours, I heard you were in great distress, and am come in to see you."

"I don't want you," he said gruffly.

"But I want *you*."

"And what d'ye want with me?"

"I want you to come to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners; and *He* wants you to come to Him. Let me tell you, it's a serious thing to die."

"Oh, I've made up my mind to that; so you need say no more to me about it;" and, taking up the newspaper, he resumed his reading.

"What have you made up your mind to?"

"Oh, to die, to be sure! there's nothing for me but death."

"Well, but how is it to be with you after death? You know that after death comes the judgment."

"Oh, I want no more of you! God is merciful, and I've no fear of His damning me! He never made man to damn him."

"I know that; it is man that damns himself. The Lord says, 'Thou hast destroyed thyself,' and adds, 'in Me is your help.' 'Look unto Me,' He says again, 'and be ye saved.'"

"Oh, I've plenty of you! I want none of your talk."

Finding he could make nothing of him, he said, "Will you allow me to pray for you?"

"Oh, if you like; I don't much care about your prayer."

The missionary prayed; but the moment he began, the man took up his paper and read.

"I'll come back and see you," said Mr. P——, when he had finished praying.

"You may if you like," rejoined the man; "but I don't care about your coming." And he went away.

He returned next week. The invalid's wife opened the door, and, as before, left the house when he entered.

"How are you to-day?" said the missionary as he entered, and found the man again in bed at the newspapers.

"No better, and never will."

"Hadn't you better go to the infirmary?"

"Oh, I've been there already."

"Were you long there?"

"No; just a day. I didn't like it. There's no use about it: I'll never get better."

"Well, that may be; but it is right to use the means which God has put in our power, and look to Him for the blessing"—

"Oh, I see what you are to be at again," he said, hastily interrupting him—"religion."

"I want you to come to Christ Jesus, the Saviour, who alone can save your precious soul."

"Oh, you needn't trouble yourself about that. I've no fear."

"Perhaps not; but I have great fear you will die out of Christ, in your sins; and then there is no salvation after death. Jesus came into the world to seek and save sinners, even the chief."

"Do you think that *I* am the *chief* of sinners?"

"Do you think yourself a *sinner*?"

"Yes; but not the chief of them."

"Well, you say you're a sinner—then you need a Saviour. You need salvation; and there is none other name given under heaven whereby you can be saved, but the name of Jesus. And I've to tell you that heaven is a holy place; and 'nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie,' shall enter into heaven. Jesus hath said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

"Oh, I've enough of that; I've made up my mind; you needn't say another word to me. I'll take my chance."

"Ah, my dear sir, there is no chance in the matter. Jesus says, 'Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again.' And what's more, Jesus hath said, 'Except ye repent, ye shall perish.' Think, my

friend, of this. Your soul is so precious, that nothing can redeem it but the blood of the Lamb. Jesus, at this moment, stands at the door of your heart, with a free, full pardon; ready to forgive you all your sins; willing to wash you in His blood; to clothe you with His righteousness; and to put you among the children." And he left the house.

The third visit was like the preceding: again the wife fled, and the man was at his newspaper.

"Well, have you been thinking about what I was saying?" inquired Mr. P——, after a question or two about his health.

"No, I haven't," he replied angrily.

"I am grieved to think that you're dying, and yet unconcerned about an interest in Christ."

"I told you before that I had made up my mind, and so you needn't trouble yourself."

"I cannot do that, my friend; I'm greatly troubled about your state. Oh, if you would lay down those papers, and go to your Bible, you would see what you are as a sinner, and what you're exposed to. You're within a step of death and the grave, where the mercy of God is not to be found. 'Now is the day of salvation.' 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart.' Oh, hear the Lord saying, 'Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live.'"

As he went on setting forth Christ to him, the man laughed in his face. "Well, I'll pray for you," he said, "that the Lord may bring you to a sense of your state. Oh that He would quicken you!" He prayed. All the time the man read the newspapers. Having finished praying, Mr. P—— again left the house.

The next visit was the turning-point. As he entered, the wife was pressing past him, as usual, to get away.

"Oh, don't go out," said the

missionary kindly, laying his hand on her shoulder. "I'm sure it's from the best motives I come to see your husband. Just sit down." She sat down; and Mr. P—— began to speak to her husband a little; but he found him as hard-hearted as ever.

"I'll pray for you once more," he said. And as he began the poor man resumed his newspaper. But before he had prayed many minutes, the paper fell from his hand. When the prayer was concluded, he was bathed in tears, and so also was his wife.

"Oh," he said, with a faltering voice, and grasping the missionary by the hand, "will you come back and see me?"

"I will, with all my heart." And he left them both in tears.

"Come away; I am glad to see you," was the joyful welcome of the dying man, as Mr. P—— entered the next day, and found him poring over the Bible.

"I'm glad to see that Book in your hands," said he. "What has led you to lay aside the newspaper and turn to that?"

"Oh, sir, it was your last prayer. I felt my heart melted; and ever since then I have felt myself to be in an awful state. Oh, what a sinner I've been! All that you've said of me as a sinner was true."

"Well, I've said just what that blessed Book says of myself and of every one who is out of Christ. But Christ died for the chief of sinners; His blood was shed for you and for me. Hear what He says: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' And once the Lord forgives, He also forgets. Hear again what He says: 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' And again: 'He will cast all your sins into the depths of the sea.'"

"But I feel as if the Lord would

not receive me, the way I have been living. I had no conception I was such a sinner as I am. The more I think of myself, and the way I've spent my days, the more I wonder I'm out of hell. How had you such patience with me?"

"Surely I should have patience, when I think of the patience and long-suffering of my God. He waited long on me."

"Did He?"

"Yes. He waited; and called again and again upon me; but at length He made me willing in the day of His power. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Just go to Him as a poor, condemned sinner, and He will give you an instant pardon."

"Oh, do you think so?" he rejoined earnestly.

"Yes, I do; because He says so. He says, 'Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near.' Now, at this moment, He is near you, by His word. "Then He adds: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.' Now, will you think upon these truths till I call again? for they are God's truths."

The man took hold of him by the hand. "I can't let you go away," he said; "you will pray for me?" He prayed.

"Oh, don't be long in coming back," he said; "I weary for your coming."

"Well, how are you to-day?"

asked Mr. P——, the next time he called.

"Much weaker, but much happier. I think I can now lay hold of Jesus as my only Saviour. I can trust in Him now. I can cast on Him all my sins. I believe that He died for ungodly me. Oh, those words that you spoke to me last! I've been looking at them, and praying over them."

"Are you suffering as much pain as you did?"

"Yes; but, d'ye know, I can bear it better now."

"Oh, sir," said his wife, "every time you come, he seems to get more patience and submission. He's just another man. He never prayed before, neither did I; but now he's often praying in the night, and also through the day."

"What do you think of Jesus now?" said the missionary, turning to the dying man.

"I am sure I can say He is my Friend, my Saviour, my Redeemer; for He has redeemed my soul from sin. Yes; He has given me to hate it, and to love Him whom once I hated. Oh, that blessed Book!" he added, taking up the Bible. "I once hated it; but now I love it. And its sweet promises, how they comfort me in my affliction! None but Christ for me!"

He lingered on, says Mr. P——, for several weeks, rejoicing in Christ. At intervals he fell into darkness, but it was only when he turned in upon himself. The moment he looked to the Saviour, he got light and peace.

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THIS IS NOT OUR REST.



ONE prophet says, "The earth mourneth" (Isa. xxiv. 2); another says, "There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet" (Jer. xlix. 23); and another good man of old, who had known many a change, "Man is born to trouble" (Job v. 7). Such, then, is our lot in "this present evil world." We cannot hinder this, nor turn

this earth into a place of joy. We may soothe grief, or take off the edge of pain, or dry up tears, or help to bear burdens; but that is all. Earth still is earth; man cannot make it paradise.

We cannot say to the leaf, Fall not; nor to the storm, Rage not; nor to the night, Become day. We

cannot say to disease, Touch me not ; nor to labour, Weary me not ; nor to pain, Cease to wound me ; nor to anxiety, Depart from me ; nor to death, Come not near my dwelling ; nor to the grave, Give up the dear dust that has been entrusted to thy keeping. We cannot cleanse the air, nor take off the curse, nor bind Satan, nor banish sin.

Sin and evil are here. Past times have said the same, and the present time knows its own bitterness. The earth mourneth ; there is sorrow on the sea ; and man is born to trouble. It will not do to hide grief, or try to make ourselves believe that the wound is slight. "All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it," is the wise king's testimony (Eccles. i. 8) ; and we know that this witness is true. "The whole creation groaneth," is the apostle's verdict (Rom. viii. 22), and daily we hear the groan.

Many are the sorrows which teach us that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Sickness, separation, losses, cares, uncertainties, disappointments, have made all of us feel that this is not our rest. Luther once said truly, "The gospel of Christ is good news indeed, but save this, I know little else in this world that deserves the name." This is a true saying, and every man has, at times at least, been fain to own it as such. Men try to hide their troubles ; but this only increases them. Men try to drown them in mirth, and pleasure, and business, but this avails nothing. Men try to harden themselves in them by saying, It is the common lot, and we must just do the best to get through a weary life. But in vain. The heart still knows its own bitterness, and sighs in secret, "Oh, who will show me any good ?"

These things are not by chance, as is often said ; nor by fate, as the heathen used to say ; nor because there is no God, as the fool says in

his heart. They come by Law. Yes, they come by law ; even that law which has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Nor is that law hard or wrong. It is holy, and just, and good. It is not the law of an unjust judge ; it is not the law of Satan ; it is the law of God. And were it not for this law, bad as earth is, it would become a thousand times worse ; it would be hell. Little does man think how much his own happiness, and this his world's order and stability, depend upon this awful law. Without it creation could not hold together. Without it there might as well be no God at all.

God has not changed this law ; neither can He change it, for He "cannot lie." He lays checks on it, for otherwise we should be consumed and perish. No flesh could live were that law let fully loose upon us, with all its penalties. But though God, in His large grace, sets bounds to this law, still He carries it out ; nor does He let it sleep for a day. On, on, on it goes, hour after hour, showing us what an evil sin is, and with what a holy God we have to do. Oh, what a revelation of sin is the history of time's sorrows ! Oh, what must sin be ; how terribly must God hate it ; how desirous must He be that we should hate it too ; when, at such a cost of suffering to creation, He thus, for ages, holds up to view before men and angels that abominable thing which man himself brought into the world, and which he still prefers to God !

Sorrow speaks to men's hearts. We know and feel this. We own that it has to do with the heart, and hence we speak of the "heart's bitterness," the "heart's griefs," and the like. But sorrow does more than this. It speaks to the conscience ; and it is in so doing that it is the solemn utterance of law, the very voice of the righteous, yet still loving, God.

When God sent sorrow upon the house of the widow of Sarepta, by causing her son to die, He was aiming at her conscience. He had sent other trials, but they had failed. Her husband had died; but the end was not gained. There came a famine to the land, meal and oil had failed, death looked her in the face; but conscience was not yet touched. A prophet dwelt with her; a daily miracle was wrought in her house, by the multiplying of her meal and oil; yet conscience was still asleep. God now takes His last arrow and aims it; He "slays her son." The point is gained at last. The conscience is smitten. Sorrow has done its work. She cries in her sore anguish, "O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" (1 Kings xvii. 18).

How useless sorrow is when it stops short of the conscience. Nay, how dangerous, how delusive it is; sometimes more dangerous and more delusive than joy. And how sad the thought that we should be made to sorrow in vain, that the pain we have felt has all been thrown away. We sometimes reproach ourselves and reproach each other with throwing away money or labour; but what after all is this in comparison with the throwing away of sorrow? Wasted treasure, wasted toil, wasted strength, wasted blood; what are you all in comparison with wasted sorrow? Oh, there is nothing so profoundly sad, so affecting, so appalling, so fitted to make angels weep, as man's waste of sorrow. Oh, friends and fellow-men, shall all the pains which God has taken with you only end in sentimentalism, or deception, or increased hardness of heart?

Yet so it must be if sorrow has not reached your conscience, if it has not convinced you of sin, if it has not spoken to you with the voice of the judge, if it has not said to you,

"O man, thou art a sinner, and the wrath of a holy God lies on thee for thy sin." It is a bitter thing to labour in vain, but it is a far more bitter thing to suffer in vain. Yet that bitter thing is your portion, O man, if the sorrow that has smitten you has not gone further than the feelings; if it has not reached your conscience.

But the use of sorrow does not end here. It is meant not merely to wound the conscience; but so to wound it as to lead it to the true Healer. For there is healing as well as wounding; and the wounding is in vain, if it does not end in the healing.

Thus it is written concerning this healing of the conscience, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Truly to pacify the conscience there must be the removal of that which alarmed it,—the sense of personal guilt and divine wrath. Sorrow proclaimed the end of sin and the condemnation of the sinner; and nothing can effectually meet this but the knowledge of sin borne by another for us, the tidings of condemnation transferred from ourselves to a surety.

This surety is the Son of God,— "the Word made flesh." It is He who is "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It is He whose "soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death"; whose sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; and whose prayer was, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." It is He who was "made perfect through suffering," who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God. No sorrow ever equalled His, no soul was ever pierced as His was.

And here lies our salvation,— Christ suffering, the just for the

unjust. Not merely Christ revealing God's love, but Christ bringing that love to us in righteousness, Christ making known to us the grace of God by that very act which condemned our sin. It is this that we need to know more and more fully, in order that our souls may find rest. Anything short of this is a mere covering of the wound, not a true healing of it. In the work of this divine substitute there is the provision for this healing, and in the knowledge of this work is the true healing to be found. Christ is the bearer of our sins, the bearer of our burdens, the bearer of our sorrows. To know Him as the bearer of sin, is to have our sin borne and taken away. To know Him as the bearer of burdens, is to have our burdens borne, and our shoulders lightened of every load. To know Him as the bearer of our sorrows, is to have our sorrows borne, and wounds healed, our souls filled with His heavenly peace.

For "Christ is all and in all." "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." And all that is required for pardon, in the way of doing, has been done by Him, once for all. We proclaim salvation by works; but the works through which salvation comes are those of the Son of God. We preach salvation by grace; and the grace through which the salvation comes is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We preach salvation by suffering and sacrifice; and this suffering and sacrifice are those of the Eternal Son of God. We preach salvation by faith;

and this faith by which we are saved is faith in Him who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; in Him whose finished work is the resting-place of the weary, the relief of the burdened, the consolation of the sorrowful, and the great cure of the soul's manifold diseases.

O friend and fellow-man, the world you live in is a world where sin is reigning. It is not yet delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But where sin is reigning, there grace is reigning too; and we tell you of the sin only to tell you of the grace,—the grace that reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Grace (that is, free love) reigning through righteousness unto eternal life! This is our message. And what can be more suitable for the condemned and the weary? Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ! This is also our message. And is not this too the needed message for the unreconciled and disquieted?

These tidings are true. Do you not know that they are so? Have you not heard the report about the death and resurrection of the Son of God; and do you not mean to believe it, that you may be saved? You have heard the Father's testimony to the Person and the Sacrifice of Him whom He calls "the Christ of God"; and will you not receive it, that in receiving it you may have eternal life, and be done with condemnation, death, and hell, for ever?

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“ANY MAN;” OR, “IT MEANS ME.”



GOD'S ways of reaching the soul are wondrous and manifold ; but as it is by His Word that it is quickened into life, so also by that same Word ever is it that liberty and peace are known. When He begins a work, He always finishes it ; though many a year may roll by between the moment when He awakens, and the hour of full deliverance.

I do not mean that this must always necessarily be the case, though, as a fact, it often is so ; but it is a sweet thought, that His gracious eye is never for one moment taken off the soul that is the object of His love, and about to be the subject of His saving grace.

As to Moses of old He said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My

people which are in Egypt, and have *heard their cry* by reason of their taskmasters; for I *know their sorrows*; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey;" so now, blessed be His name, does He "*see*," "*know*," and "*hear*" all the groans, sorrows, and tears of an awakened, exercised sinner, and in His own time and way does He love to "*deliver*." Oftentimes the way of His deliverance is very striking, as perhaps my reader knows.

Some years ago I received one evening a letter from a lady, begging me to call next day to see her servant, who, she stated, was very deaf. The next morning I was wending my way to the house, when I met, in the street, a dear Christian man—a greengrocer. We stopped, and had a little talk about the Lord, and then he said, "Oh, doctor, I should so like you to see a young woman I have just parted from. I had gone to her mistress's house with some vegetables, and, finding she came from my part of the country, I was led to speak to her about her soul. She is in an awful state of distress, and has been so for over two years. At that time she lived in Berwickshire. God's Spirit was working mightily in her neighbourhood, and many were being converted. One night she attended the preaching of one of the Lord's servants you well know—Mr. J. W. S. That evening she was deeply convicted of her sin, and of her lost condition as a sinner before God. Though invited to remain and be spoken with, she left the meeting, and went towards her own house. As she neared it, the thought presented itself, that *just then* was the moment when she might be saved, but that if she missed it she might never be. Acting on this, she

retraced her steps to the preaching-room, but hung about outside the door, fearing to go in and be spoken to. Eventually she went back to her house, without pardon or peace. No sooner had she reached it, than Satan whispered in her ear, that, as she had thus acted, all hope of salvation was, for her, for ever gone,—she had missed the day of grace, and the Lord would henceforth have nothing to do with her. This foul lie she believed, and from that moment settled gloom filled her soul, and anguish has been her constant portion, as she regards herself hopelessly and irretrievably lost."

Much interested in this sad case, I said, "Where does she live?"

"With Mrs. —, in No. 23 — Street."

"Is she deaf?"

"Yes, very. Why do you ask that?"

"Well," I said, "it is very remarkable; she must be the very person I am just going to visit professionally, as I got a note from her mistress last night."

"The Lord go with you, and give you a word for her anxious, troubled heart;" and so saying, my friend passed on his way, and I made for the person in question.

The bodily ailment having received due attention, Jane (for such was her name) was leaving the room to follow my instructions, when I recalled her, and said, "You are certainly very deaf, Jane, but I fancy not so deaf but that you can hear the voice of Jesus. Have you heard His voice yet?"

She instantly dropped her head on her bosom, and the sad, pained look—which almost all the deaf have—deepened into utter gloom as she remained quite speechless.

"You surely do not mean to say that you have come to this time of life, and that the Lord has never yet

spoken to you of His love, or called you to come to Him?"

"My doom is fixed," was now her sad reply.

"Your doom is fixed? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that your case is too bad for Christ? that He will not save you?"

"I fear so, sir."

"But why will He not save you? If what you say be true, you are the first sinner I ever met that Jesus would not save. Tell me, did He never call you to come to Him?"

To these queries Jane gave no answer; so, after waiting a little, I said, "I expect the truth is just this: in days gone by He did call you, and you were almost converted, but the devil got you to defer your soul's salvation, and as you did this, he has told you since that your day of grace is over, and that Christ would have nothing more to say to such a wretched, good-for-nothing sinner. Now, is not that your case?"

Quite amazed at this unfolding of her history, she exclaimed, "Yes, that's just it; but how could you know that, sir?"

Without telling her the way in which I had thus got to know her history, I merely said, "The blessed Lord often lets His servants know the state of people's souls, that, through them, He may meet their need. John ii. 9 is not recorded without a divine purpose: 'When the governor of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, he knew not whence it was (*but the servants which drew the water knew*).' The Lord tells His servants wondrous secrets for His own glory oftentimes."

Thus saying, I went on:—"How I got to know your state is not the point, Jane, but this—Do you really want to be saved?"

"Indeed I do, sir; I would give everything to be saved, and know it."

"Well, can you save yourself?"

"No."

"Do you believe that Jesus is *able* to save you?"

"Yes, I believe He is."

"But is He *willing*? that's the question."

As to this, all was darkness; so, assuring her of His willingness, yea, His fervent desire, to save all who come to Him simply, and trust Him only, I at length said, "Now, if He said in His Word He would receive and bless you, would you believe Him?"

"If I saw it in His Word, I would believe Him!" was her answer.

Looking to the Lord for guidance in His Word to help this poor trembling soul, I took out my little pocket Testament and read to her, "'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. *He that believeth on Me*, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified' (John vii. 37-39). Now, Jane, that is plain enough. The only question is, Are you really thirsting? Are you really desirous of having Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and of having the thirst of your needy heart met by Him?"

"Indeed, sir, I am thirsting. Oh, if only I could be sure that it meant me!"

"Well, look at it yourself;" and I turned the page round that she might see it. "He says, '*If any man* thirst.' Who does '*any man*' mean?"

There was a moment's pause, and then faith won the day, as she exclaimed, "*It means me!*"

From that moment she knew she was saved. The troubled look departed from her face, and instead

thereof it was lit up with the joy of God's salvation.

Some years after this I was preaching the gospel in a town in Berwickshire. After the meeting a young person came and spoke with me, whom at first I did not recognise as my friend Jane. Recalling the foregoing incident, I said playfully, "Well, Jane, is your doom fixed?" "Oh yes, sir, 'my doom is fixed,' but fixed with Christ," was her happy answer.

And now, my dear reader, what about your soul? Is your doom fixed? How do you stand in relation to Christ? If you are still a careless, unconcerned sinner, what an awful doom is yours! "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17).

I pray you let not this doom be yours. If the Spirit of God has awakened you to a sense of your sin, be thankful for it, but do not rest there. Salvation is not in anxiety, but in Christ. Let nothing keep you back from Him. You may have Satan laying to your charge every conceivable sin, but this need not keep you from Christ. Recollect He came "to seek, and to save, that which was *lost*." As such, you may claim Him as your Saviour this very moment.

How sweetly fall His blessed words on the ear of a wearied, miserable, self-condemned sinner,—“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” Thirsty, all you have to do is simply come to Him, trust Him, believe Him, give Him credit for

His love, and then drink and live for ever. He gives you eternal life; but more, He gives you also the Holy Spirit, to dwell in you, and lead you unto all truth. When you have received from Him what His love supplies, then “rivers of living water” will flow out. Coming to Him and drinking, *they flow in, as you believe*. Afterwards they *flow out* in testimony and service for Him. How simple, and how sweet!

In John iii. 5 the Lord speaks of a man being “born of water and of the Spirit.” That is the *new birth*, and the water comes *down*. In John iv. 14 He says, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water *springing up* into everlasting life.” This is *worship*; the new life, in the power of the Holy Ghost, rising to its source—God. The water *springs up*. Here in John vii. the water *flows out* in every variety of *service to Christ*.

Dear reader, who does “any man” mean?

FAITH is a very simple thing,
Though little understood;
It frees the soul from death's dread
sting,
By resting on the blood.

Faith is not what we see or feel,
It is a simple trust
In what the God of love has said
Of Jesus as the Just.

The perfect One who died for me,
Now on His Father's throne,
Presents our names before our God,
And pleads His blood alone.

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A VISIT OF MERCY.

“This day is salvation come to this house.”—Luke xix. 9.



THE doctor is always to be regarded as a good friend in time of need. His presence is a messenger of hope; his work stands as a kind of gospel parable, or picture of something else far more precious than itself. The rattle of his carriage in the street, his footfall on the stair, his voice heard outside the bedroom door, is

akin to that other “joyful sound” which brings peace and salvation to the soul.

The Evangelist Luke was of this profession, and his story of Jesus is given very much from a doctor’s point of view. He refers to disease in the manner of one who knows the symptoms both of the trouble and

its cure. He seems to take special pleasure in exalting Jesus as the Great Physician. To his view the whole world is like a hospital full of diseased bodies and dying souls; and lo! the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Like most other doctors, Luke is a sharp man for discerning character as well. Among the Scripture writers he is unequalled for his character-sketches. They are very numerous; they are most sharply defined. Often they are set before us in couples, the one in contrast to the other.

Thus we have Herod and Pilate; Martha and Mary; the penitent thief on the cross, and the other thief on the cross who was not penitent; the prodigal son, and the other son who in the end seemed rather the worse of the two, although not prodigal; the rich man and Lazarus; the good Samaritan who had the blessedness of giving help, and the half-dead man who had only the more limited blessedness of receiving it.

Perhaps still more striking than any of these is the contrast he gives between Zacchæus and Bartimæus, and the Saviour's method of dealing with them. They both needed salvation, and Jesus saved them both. The one had blind eyes, the other a blind soul. The one had faith, and was rich in faith; it was the only wealth he had: the other had none, but he was rich in this world's goods.

The two men were at opposite sides of the city. On entering it, Jesus met the one at the wayside begging; and on leaving it, he saw the other looking down with curiosity from a leafy tree. Let us see how the Saviour dealt with this well-to-do inhabitant of the West End.

We have here the Saviour seeking the lost. The lost man was not seeking Him. Zacchæus would have let salvation pass by unsought, uncared for. At first he had no more desire

for Christ than the tree had in which he was half concealed.

But Christ's love would not let him alone, would not pass by without an effort at least to save that which was lost. Just as the woman, with her whole heart, seeks for her lost piece of money, and the shepherd, with his whole heart, seeks for his lost sheep; and the prodigal's father waits and prays; with all his heart, for the recovery of his lost son, so did God in Christ Jesus yearn for this man's restoration; so is the Father of love and mercy, always and everywhere, yearning for the salvation of poor sinners, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9).

What had Zacchæus lost? Many things which this world puts high value on. Although he was wealthy, he was not respectable; it was ill-gotten wealth. He had lost character, until now he had none left to lose. In the public he was despised and hated. But his chief loss lay not there. It lay in this, that he was an unconverted soul. Let us see how his conversion was brought about.

1. *It was curiosity that led him into the way of it.* He wished to see Jesus, "who He was," what sort of looking man He was; that was all. It was not a high motive, yet not to be despised; it was the best he was capable of at the time. The result showed it was not worthless. A low motive is never to be despised if it is the highest practicable.

Motives are relatively valuable as pieces of money are. A penny may buy what it would take a pound to buy in altered circumstances. So with motives. A low motive in a child, or in a savage, may gain what only a high motive would in a civilised man.

A man has been known to be converted by the first sentence he read in a book which he opened in a waiting-room from sheer curiosity,

or from having nothing else to do. It is well people should attend public worship, be their motive what it may. They may come merely to see and to be seen, and yet God's blessing may be upon them ere they leave His house.

Parents take their children at a low standard, and train them to something higher. So Christ took Zacchæus as he was, and wrought his conversion by means of his curiosity.

2. *It was done by a touch of unexpected kindness.* The man was surprised to hear Jesus say He would come home and eat bread with him. To hear his name mentioned, to be kindly spoken to by those hallowed lips, brought, we may suppose, the "lump into his throat." It was so unlike what he was used to.

Jesus did not adopt the severer course, as He might well have done, and say to him, "Zacchæus, you are a great sinner." The man knew that already; Jesus told him what he did not know. What Jesus said, not in so many words, was this: "Zacchæus, you have a great Saviour. You do not think anybody cares for you; you think God hates and despises you. I am come to tell you it is not true. You are not God-forsaken. You are loved, with a boundless love. If the world cannot trust you, I can. Zacchæus, I claim you as My friend; and I am coming home with you to-night, to eat bread at your house, and to have a night's lodging there. Make haste, and come down."

How wonderfully fine is the manner of Jesus! He is so kind, so courteous, so tender in dealing with the sinner, casting no reproaches, without the faintest show of condescension, or air of superior sanctity; and, while conferring a boon of unspeakable value, doing it in the style of one who rather *begged* a favour than *bestowed* it. His kindness comes from Him as sweetly and naturally as the fragrance issues from a flower.

What a change it wrought! It would seem as though on the spot and on the instant the man became as the "bruised reed" that must not be broken, and the "smoking flax" that must not be quenched. To think he had a friend in God, the friendship which he least of all deserved, was more than his heart could bear. He was a broken-down penitent from the moment he received that touch of unexpected kindness. Thus was the change wrought.

3. *There was evidence that it was greatly needed.* In the public he was viewed as a notoriously bad man; stigmatised by that dreadful name, "sinner." His house was not fit for Jesus to lodge in, so the people thought,—though fit enough it must have been as regards ample and sumptuous accommodation.

Nor did he himself deny the charges made against him. He stood forth in the crowd, in midst of the public clamour, and made a clean breast of it. A nobler confession before God, and before the world, was never made. It was open avowal that he was ashamed of his sin, but not ashamed of his Saviour. He confessed he had not been a friend to the poor. He confessed he had grown rich by making others poor.

Jesus, too, in indirect way, bears witness how much the change was needed. He would not have said *salvation* had come to that house had it not been a doomed house before. He would not have said, "He also is a son of Abraham," had not the *faith* of Abraham just entered a heart from which before it had been conspicuously absent. Nor would He have made reference to the Son of Man saving "that which was lost," had there been a ray of hope left for Zacchæus, apart from Christ's own intervention. There was evidence that Zacchæus' conversion was greatly needed.

4. *There was evidence, quite as clear,*

that it was truly accomplished. Not only does he, on the spot, own Christ as his Master, but he shows at once, as by instinct, the *spirit* of a true disciple. It proves how thoroughly, how swiftly, love in a converted heart will bring about reformation. At one sweep he gives half his wealth to the poor, and, *in addition*, makes fourfold restitution for any unjust act he has committed.

Never was he so zealous in selfishness as now he is to do justly and to love mercy. It is the love of Christ constraining him. He has found Christ. The loss of all else now would not much distress him. Void of pity before, now he is full of it; deeply moved by the needs and rights of others, not his own. These, surely, are marks of a true conversion. Curiosity led him into the way of it. It was helped on by a touch of kindness. It was greatly needed. It was most marvellously accomplished.

Changes like this in suddenness, though not common, are not infrequent. A flood of new light entered that man's soul, such as entered the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Many of our friends and neighbours know by experience how quick and powerful the grace of God can be, and how it may be manifested in times and ways the most unlikely.

Not long ago, a friend told the present writer that forty years had passed since he was given up for lost by every earthly friend, excepting his mother; and that one morning, on awaking after a night's debauch, the mere sight of his mud-stained

clothes was used, somehow, by the grace of heaven, to lead him into a godly resolve, which he has kept ever since. The change came like a flash of lightning. It seemed at once to remove all difficulty. From that moment his soul was emancipated; and he stood up, as he still does, in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free,—one of the most sober and Christly men in the city of Glasgow.

Reader, you are one of Christ's beloved. You may not think so. Your conscience may persuade you it is not so. Your friends and foes alike may be unanimous in thinking it is not so. But it is true, notwithstanding. You are one of Christ's beloved. The love of God in Him is seeking you, and He fain would (if not there already) find lodging in your heart. Oh, receive Him gladly. Listen to His kindly voice, and withdraw not your soul from His healing touch. He is the Physician who heals with His own stripes. You are redeemed by His blood. You are renewed by the spirit of His love. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

How great is the beauty and grandeur of the gospel, when it declares that, in Christ's name, the feeblest may urge his feebleness, and nothing else—the vilest may urge his vileness, the hopeless his hopelessness, and nothing else—as an acceptable plea before God, because it is true that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost!" (Luke xix. 10).

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THE RUSSIAN NURSE.



See page 4.

AMONG the servants in my family, while I resided in St. Petersburg, was a Russian nurse. Her name was Erena. Her appearance was much in her favour. She was a clever-looking girl. Her dress was plain and neat. There was nothing gaudy or expensive about her. All was just what you would wish and expect to see in a good servant.

We first became acquainted with her in the beginning of 1827. It was then that she called at my house, and was engaged by my wife. After she was engaged, all went on well until Ash-Wednesday. This was the first day of Lent, and as Erena was a strict observer of the ceremonies of the Greek Church,—rigid fasting, and going to church two or three

times daily, and, in "Passion Week," four times a day,—she was determined to perform them. Her mistress spoke to her of the impropriety of going out so often, but she replied, "Do you wish me to lose my soul, ma'am?" "No," was the answer; "far from it; I wish your soul to be saved: but your fasting, praying, and going to church, will not save your soul. There must be something more than all this. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, and it is by faith in Him alone that sinners are saved." "Ah," said she, "that is your religion; but I have been taught differently, and I must attend to my own religion." Frequent conversations to the same effect took place, until my wife said to me, "I think we shall be obliged to part with Erena, she is so superstitious." I said, "The poor girl is ignorant. Try to throw a little light into her mind, and then the superstitions will drop off like the leaves in the autumn; there will be nothing to hold them." The next day her mistress said to her, "Erena, I wish to teach you to read; would you like to learn?" "Oh yes, ma'am, I should be delighted to learn." So the work of education commenced; and, in the course of a few weeks, she could make out an easy lesson very well. Then she was supplied with a Russian Testament, which she studied diligently whenever she had a little leisure. She told us afterwards that, from the first day she came to live with us, she was very observant about our religion, and that she was much struck with our family worship. She had never before lived in a house where was family prayer; but God was thus about to prepare her mind for the great change which she was soon to experience.

That "great change" took place on the Lord's day, and in the following manner: When we went to

chapel, her mistress left Erena in charge of our children, and said to her, "I recommend you, Erena, to read the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles." This excited her curiosity. "What can there be in the tenth chapter of the Acts?" and she began to read. And as she proceeded, she found that Cornelius fasted, and prayed, and gave alms. "Ah, this is delightful," she thought. "This man was of our religion; he kept the fast." But when she found that an angel was sent to him to tell him what he must do, this staggered her. She was astonished, and seemed disappointed, and on her return home, she came to her instructress, and with an inquiring countenance said, "I wish you would explain this to me, ma'am; I don't understand it. Here is a very good man, who kept the fast, and prayed to God, and gave alms; but that was not enough. Now, why was it not enough? I never was taught to do anything more. Tell me, why was the angel sent to him?" Her mistress answered, "Do you think God would send an angel to you, or to us, or to any other person, unless some important end was to be answered by it?" "Ah," said she, "I did not think of that." "Very well, then; read the chapter through, and examine every verse, and you will find out why the angel was sent to him." She then returned to her room, and read the chapter attentively, until she came to that beautiful verse, where Peter says of Christ, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." This was enough. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shone into her heart, to give her the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). The scales fell from her eyes, and she saw in a moment the way of

salvation. She could read no more. She arose, and, running to her mistress, she clasped her hands and exclaimed, "Oh, ma'am, now I see it! It was not by fasting, nor by praying, nor by giving alms, that he was to be saved; but by believing on the Son of God. Now I see it!" And from that day the change was glorious. She became one of the most active and devoted, and, perhaps, useful young Christians that we had ever seen.

About a year after her conversion, a circumstance occurred which afforded her continual opportunities for explaining God's method of saving sinners to persons whom she had never seen before. I began to be extensively employed in circulating the Scriptures, and prayer books, and religious tracts. This brought multitudes of people about us. There was scarcely a person who came to whom she could speak, but she would, in simple, striking language, show them how God can be just, and yet "the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). She spoke the German, and Finnish, and Russian languages, and thus she had ample scope for gratifying the desires of her heart; nor did she ever appear so happy as when she could get the ear of a poor sinner to listen to the words of eternal life.

One striking instance of her usefulness must not be passed over. A hawker called at my house to sell his wares, when she inquired, "Have you a New Testament, brother?" "No," said the man; "a Testament would be of no use to me." "Why?" "Because I cannot read." "Ah, but it might be of use to you though you cannot read." "How?" said the hawker. "Perhaps some of your family can read." "Yes, I did not think of that; my brother has two boys at school who can read." "Well, then, buy a Testament, and let the boys read to

you, that you may hear something about the Lord Jesus Christ before you die." The man bought it, and as he was going away she said to him, "Where do you live?" "I am a thousand versts from home," he replied, "but at present I live in a lodging-house." "Are there many lodgers besides you?" "Yes, many." "Perhaps some of them can read." "I do not know. I never saw a book among them." So he departed, and we saw him no more until the winter commenced, when thousands of the labouring classes go back into the interior to their families. And now the hawker made his appearance again, and said to my wife, "Will you please to let me have a copy of every book you have in the house?" "That is a large order, friend; what are you going to do with so many books?" "You would not ask that question, ma'am, if you knew what good that New Testament has done which Erena recommended to me in the spring." "What good has it done? I should like to hear." "Before I bought that book, it was the custom with many of the lodgers to go out into the city after supper, and come home at midnight drunk, while others were playing at cards at home; but as soon as I showed them the New Testament, one said, 'I can read'; and another said, 'I can read'; and a third said, 'I can read'; so they took it by turns, and read chapter after chapter. This excited a deep interest, and the drunkards forsook their glass, and the gamblers their cards; and there are neither drunkards nor card-players in our lodging-house now, ma'am. They hear two or three chapters, and then lie down to sleep. And as these men are returning to their families, they wish to take home a copy of that book which has been so beneficial to themselves."

Her kind and winning manner had a happy effect on young people. Take

the following as a specimen: A family near us had many servants. One of them came to my door on a Sabbath evening, when Erena was sitting in the porch, reading the Gospel of John. "Come in," said the devout reader. "Be seated. Would you like to hear a portion of God's holy word?" "Oh yes, by all means. Proceed." The place of the Scripture which she read was this: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, who is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him" (John iv. 23-26, 28-30). "Delightful," said the visitor; "pray, stop a moment, and I will go and call my fellow-servants. I think they will rejoice to hear it, for surely they have never heard such things since they were born." She then arose, and ran and called her fellow-servants, and brought three of them with her, and the same chapter was read again, accompanied by many solemn remarks on the state of unconverted sinners, and the suitability and all-sufficiency of Jesus to

save all that come unto God by Him. None of these four young women were able to read, and it is more than probable that they had lived until that day without hearing a chapter in a language which they could understand. But now the seal was loosed, and the Book was opened, and the blessed Saviour seemed to be speaking to them. One of these young women afterwards came to my wife for a New Testament, and *The Dairyman's Daughter*, and *The Young Cottager*, in the Russian language, to send to her brother, who could read, and who lived several hundred miles off. On receiving these precious treasures, her heart seemed to swell with ecstasy. She pressed them to her bosom, and kissed the hand from which she received them.

Amidst all her attempts to do good to strangers, Erena was not unmindful of her relatives. They had the first claim, and she met it. We have often known her leave herself without a rouble, in order to send a few comforts to her aged mother; and these were always accompanied with some good books, and a pressing letter on the subject of salvation. Nor was this labour in vain. We had every reason to believe that God blessed her pious solicitude in making her mother a genuine Christian.

On our leaving Russia, Erena accompanied us to the steamer; and as she stood gazing on us, to take the last farewell, she wiped away her tears with one hand, and waved the other in the air, as if to say, "We shall meet again in heaven!" Hallelujah!

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A NEW BIRTH!



READER,—Of course you know that you would not be living in this world if you had never been born. Your birthday was the day of your entrance into life. Everybody knows this.

Now listen to what I am going to tell you. Nobody can ever go to heaven who is not first born again in this world. Every man must

experience *a new birth* in the life that now is, if he wishes to have eternal happiness and glory in the life that is yet to come.

Perhaps these things sound strange to you. Perhaps you do not understand them. Give me your attention for a few minutes, and I will try to show you why it is necessary for us *to be born again*.

That there is such a necessity is most plain from our Lord Jesus Christ's words in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. Nothing can be more clear and positive than His language to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii. 3, 7).

The reason of this necessity is the exceeding sinfulness and corruption of our natural hearts. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are literally accurate: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Just as rivers flow downward, and sparks fly upward, and stones fall to the ground, so does a man's heart naturally incline to what is evil. We love our souls' enemies,—we dislike our souls' friends. We call good evil, and we call evil good. We take pleasure in ungodliness, we take no pleasure in Christ. We not only commit sin, but we also love sin. We not only need to be cleansed from the guilt of sin, but we also need to be delivered from its power. The natural tone, bias, and current of our minds must be completely altered. The image of God, which sin has blotted out, must be restored. The disorder and confusion which reign within us must be put down. The first things must no longer be last, and the last first. The Spirit must let in the light on our hearts, put everything in its right place, and create all things new. In a word, we must be *born again*.

It ought to be always remembered that there are two distinct things which the Lord Jesus Christ does for every sinner whom He undertakes to save. He washes him from his sins in His own blood, and gives him a free pardon:—*this is his justification*. He puts the Holy Spirit into his heart, and makes him an

entire new man:—*this is his regeneration or new birth*.

The two things are both *absolutely necessary to salvation*. The change of heart is as necessary as the pardon; and the pardon is as necessary as the change. Without the pardon we have no right or title to heaven. Without the change we should not be meet and ready to enjoy heaven, even if we got there.

The two things are *never separate*. They are never found apart. Every justified man is also a regenerate man; and every regenerate man is also a justified man. When the Lord Jesus Christ gives a man remission of sin, He also gives him repentance. When He grants peace with God, He also grants power to become a son of God. There are two great standing maxims of the glorious gospel, which ought never to be forgotten. One is, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). The other is, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

Reader, the man who denies the universal necessity of regeneration, can know very little of the heart's corruption. He is blind indeed who fancies that pardon is all we want in order to get to heaven, and does not see that pardon without a change of heart would be a useless gift. Blessed be God that both are freely offered to us in Christ's gospel, and that Jesus is able and willing to give the one as well as the other.

Surely you must be aware that the vast majority of people in the world see *nothing*, feel *nothing*, and know *nothing* in religion as they ought. How and why is this, is not the present question. I only put it to your conscience,—is it not the fact?

Tell them of the sinfulness of many things which they are doing continually,—and what is generally the reply?—"They see no

harm." Tell them of the awful peril in which their souls are,—of the shortness of time,—the nearness of eternity,—the uncertainty of life,—the reality of judgment. They feel no danger.

Tell them of their need of a Saviour,—mighty, loving, and divine; and of the impossibility of being saved from hell except by faith in Him. It all falls flat and dead on their ears. They see no such great barrier between themselves and heaven.

Tell them of holiness, and the high standard of living which the Bible requires. They cannot comprehend the need of such strictness. They see no use in being so very good.

There are thousands and tens of thousands of such people on every side of us. They will hear these things all their lives. They will even attend the ministry of the most striking preachers, and listen to the most powerful appeals to their consciences. And yet, when you come to visit them on their deathbeds, they are like men and women who never heard these things at all. They know nothing of the leading doctrines of the gospel by experience. They can render no reason whatever of their own hope.

And why and wherefore is all this? What is the explanation,—what is the cause of such a state of things? It all comes from this,—that man naturally has no sense of spiritual things. In vain the Sun of righteousness shines before him: the eyes of his soul are *blind*, and cannot see. In vain the music of Christ's invitations sounds around him: the ears of his soul are *deaf*, and cannot hear it. In vain the wrath of God against sin is set forth: the perceptions of his soul are stopped up; like the sleeping traveller, he does not perceive the coming storm. In vain the bread

and water of life are offered to him: his soul is neither hungry for the one, nor thirsty for the other. In vain he is advised to flee to the Great Physician: his soul is unconscious of its disease; why should he go? In vain you put a price into his hand to buy wisdom: the mind of his soul wanders; he is like the lunatic who calls straws a crown, and dust diamonds; he says, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Ah, reader, there is nothing so sad as the utter corruption of our nature! There is nothing so painful as the anatomy of a dead soul!

Now what does such a man need? He needs to be born again, and made a new creature. He needs a complete putting off the old man, and a complete putting on the new. We do not live our natural life till we are born into the world, and we do not live our spiritual life till we are born of the Spirit.

The plain truth is, the vast proportion of professing Christians in the world have nothing whatever of Christianity, except *the name*. The reality of Christianity, the graces, the experience, the faith, the hopes, the life, the conflict, the tastes, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness,—all these are things of which they know nothing at all. They need to be converted as truly as any among the Gentiles to whom Paul preached, and to be turned from idols, and renewed in the spirit of their minds, as really, if not as literally. And one main part of the messages which should be continually delivered to the greater portion of every congregation on earth is this,—*"Ye must be born again."*

I ask every one who reads these pages to remember this grand principle of scriptural religion: No salvation without regeneration,—no spiritual life without a new birth,—no heaven without a new heart!

Think not for a moment that the subject of this tract is a mere matter of controversy,—an empty question for learned men to argue about, but not one that concerns you. Away with such an idea for ever! It concerns you deeply. It touches your own eternal interests. It is a thing that you must know for yourself, feel for yourself, and experience for yourself, if you would ever be saved. No soul of man, woman, or child will ever enter heaven without having been *born again*.

And think not for one moment that this regeneration is a change which people may go through after they are dead, though they never went through it while they were alive. Away with such a notion for ever! Now or never is the only time to be saved. *Now*, in this world of toil and labour,—of money-getting and business,—*now* you must be prepared for heaven, if you are ever to be prepared at all. Now is the only time to be justified, now the only time to be sanctified, and now the only time to be born again. So sure as the Bible is true, the man who dies without these three things, will only rise again at the last day to be lost for ever.

You may be saved and reach heaven without many things which men reckon of great importance,—without riches, without learning, without books, without worldly comforts, without health, without house, without lands, without friends;—but *without a new birth you will never be saved at all*. Without your natural birth you would never have lived, and

moved, and read this tract on earth; without a new birth you will never live in heaven. I bless God that the saints in glory will be a multitude that no man can number. I comfort myself with the thought that after all there will be “much people” in heaven. But this I know, and am persuaded of from God’s Word,—that of all who reach heaven, there will not be one single individual who has not been born again.

Reader, I entreat you to consider seriously the things I have told you. Do you know anything of this new birth? Have you ever been born again? If not, your soul is in awful peril,—you hang on the brink of hell. Go to the Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech you, and cry to Him to save your soul. There is life and grace in Christ if you will only apply to Him. Be not lost for want of seeking. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Rest not till thou art born again!

BISHOP RYLE.

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“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

JOHN iii. 16, 17, 18.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1895.

ANDREW A. BONAR, D.D.



THE subject of this sketch very often spoke to the readers of these tracts through means of them. And in no tracts ever written were the grace, the love, the mercy and peace of the Lord Jesus more sweetly breathed than in those which came from his pen. Himself and his

Saviour were so knit together, it may be hoped this brief sketch of him, conveying not his words merely, but (as it were) his very self in it, may prove an unbounded blessing to multitudes.

Andrew Bonar was born in Edinburgh in 1810. He was of a pious

race, who in successive generations adorned the Christian ministry. After a distinguished career in the High School and in the University of Edinburgh, he studied divinity under Dr. Chalmers. He was then eighteen. "I felt myself," he says, "unsaved, and felt a secret expectation that in the course of my studies in divinity I might be brought to the truth."

About two years after this the change did come, more gradually than suddenly, not in a time of revival, but in the solitude of his own room. He describes it as a "secret, joyful hope" which crept into his heart as he sat quietly reading Guthrie's *Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ*. "I did nothing but receive," he says.

Again Dr. Bonar writes on his eighty-second birthday: "It was in the year 1830 that I found the Saviour, or rather that He found me and laid me on His shoulders rejoicing, and I have never parted company with Him all these sixty-two years." He could well appreciate what one said to him long afterwards, in describing the simplicity of his conversion: "Havena I been stupid, sir? It was sae simple; just as if I had stooped down and lifted up a clod at my feet."

After acting as assistant for a short while, first at Jedburgh, and then in connection with St. George's parish, Edinburgh, he was settled at Collace, in Strathmore, Perthshire, where he laboured for eighteen years. He was then translated to Glasgow, where the remainder of his ministry was spent, partly in Finnieston, and finally in the new church built near the West End Park.

It was a remarkable ministry for its length, still more for its spiritual unction and fruitfulness. He was one of a group of men of intense spiritual fervour, who, under God, produced the great revival of 1839. One of these was Robert M'Cheyne

of Dundee, of whom a servant girl, in a house where he stayed, said he was "*deein'* to hae folk converted." Andrew Bonar and he were as much kindred in spirit as though made of one piece; and whilst M'Cheyne's bright career soon ended, the other continued to be a "*deein'*" man in this noble sense for upwards of four-score years. By and by he wrote the celebrated "*Memoir*" of his friend, which is one of the best known and most helpful books in the world.

His work for Christ was done very quietly; quite in keeping all through with what is recorded of his boyhood. On the day in which he gained the dux gold medal of the High School, he came home as usual, and said nothing about it till his mother asked at the dinner-table, "Well, Andrew, and who got the gold medal to-day?" when he quietly drew it out of his pocket.

Not only quietude, but there was a very charming quaintness and genial humour about him in tone and manner, which, joined with the ever-present baptism of the Holy Ghost, seemed to make his very presence or personality a better gospel blessing than anything he could say or do. It is beautiful to find the children (as we might expect) keenly sensitive to this. They would linger in the church as he went from the pulpit to the vestry, in the hope of having his hand laid on their heads, and hearing him call them by their names. One little child called him "the minister with the laughing face."

"You know I am no speaker—only a talker," he says in a letter to a friend. But there was wonderful power in his talk. In public or private, in the pulpit, in the street, or at the fireside, his discoursing on divine things was like a daybreak; it came with the freshness of a spring-tide; it was like the dropping of rich

fruit from a tree in the summer of its maturity.

Some such "fruits of the Spirit" would drop from him as the following :—"God is a sin-hater, but a soul-lover." "No one who is anxious to have a Saviour has committed the unpardonable sin." "Burdens are part of a believer's education." "Self-forgetting work is heavenly work. The best part of all Christian work is that part which only God sees."

"I have come to believe this to be almost invariably true, that seldom is anything good proposed to us but we have something to object to in it at first. This seems to be the reason for the expression used by our Lord—'Thrust forth labourers.' We are all unwilling to go. The truth is, we are all a little lazy. We need to be 'thrust forth.'"

"I never like to hear any one say, 'I never trouble others with my religion.' A believer *must* trouble others with his religion." "Do much, and say little about it, and think not about what brethren say of you."

Not often has the voice of man pointed the way and brought sinners to Christ with so much of picturesque and sweet persuasiveness as did that of Dr. Bonar. What could be finer than this eccentric way of stating the gospel: "Suppose that I, a sinner, be walking along yon golden street, passing by one angel after another. I can hear them say, as I pass through their ranks, 'A sinner! a crimson sinner!' Should my feet totter? Should my eye grow dim? No; I can say to them, 'Yes, a sinner,—a crimson sinner,—but a sinner brought near by a forsaken Saviour, and now a sinner who has boldness to enter into the Holiest through the blood of Christ.'"

After not more than four years' ministry in Collace church, he could make this thrilling appeal to his people: "These walls are a witness, and their lingering echoes will be a

witness when I am in the grave. Angels have seen the cup of life held out from this pulpit and put to your lips. O men and brethren, look at that cross, and listen to what it says: 'He that hath the Son hath life!'"

If any reader of this tract is afflicted with dryness and indifference at heart, what word more wise than this of Bonar could be spoken to him: "Look into the Fountain, and the very looking will make you thirsty. Take the water of life 'freely,' though you cannot allege a single reason why you should take it. Yet take it 'without a cause.'"

At his young women's class one evening he referred to "the bricks of Babylon"—how every brick had on it the king's stamp. "So," he said, "everything we do should have the King's stamp on it." One of his hearers, not long after, was set to the tedious work of cleaning a feather-bed. Many a time she felt tempted to hurry over it, but "the bricks of Babylon" kept ringing in her ears, and she had to do it all faithfully. When Dr. Bonar called to see her, she said to him, "Oh, these bricks of Babylon were a trouble to me!" "Were they on your dusters and brooms?" he asked. "No, on a feather-bed!" she replied, to his great amusement. The story was repeated to a servant, who said, "Well, I hate cleaning the knives, but I can't but do them thoroughly now."

One day he called on a good woman, and found her busy at her washing-tub. "Oh, Doctor," was her salutation, "you always find me in a mess!" "But there's Someone helping you," he replied. "No," she said wonderingly. "Yes," he said; "your Elder Brother is with you." "From that day to this," said the good woman, "I have never begun a day's work without remembering my Elder Brother is with me." A Sabbath scholar never forgot the impression made upon him by the

minister putting his hand on his shoulder one night, and saying, "Matthew, be like Matthew the publican. He left all, rose up, and followed Jesus." Meeting a young friend on the street, he asked her what her name was. She said, "Christina." "Well," he said, "you have Christ in your name. I hope you have Him in your heart."

In these simple, homely, fatherly, and patriarchal ways he went about continually doing good, and always with a sunny face. "Now remember," he said to some friends in parting, "whenever I see you looking sad or downcast, I will ask you when you cut the Book of Psalms out of the Bible?" He was himself an illustration of one of his finest sayings,—*"A believer is an Æolian harp, and every event of his life is just the passing wind drawing out the music. And God hears it."*

With all his high thinking and deep spirituality, his humour and sound common sense yet kept him free from anything like morbid sentiment. A gentleman whom he knew to be very excitable, told him that during his illness he had had a vision of angels, and had felt one of them touch him as he lay in bed. Dr. Bonar quietly remarked, "Have you a cat in the house? Don't you think it may have been the cat?" Once when a mother told him that for twenty-four years she had prayed and made efforts for her son's conversion, but he was still unsaved, Dr. Bonar said, "Speak less to him, and speak more to God *about* him." The remark repeated to the young

man impressed him much, and not long after he was brought to Christ.

When his jubilee was celebrated in 1888, he thought too much was made of it, and remarked he had never done more than draw the water and let the flock drink.

Quoting Jacob's remark, "I shall go down to the grave with sorrow," he said, "What a mistake! He went down singing!" It happened so to Dr. Bonar himself. He died, as it were singing, on Friday, December 30, 1892, after two days of illness, aged 82.

"When I think of dying," he once said, "I think of it something in this way: I fancy myself going home from a meeting some night, and I feel not very well. I get worse, then I become unconscious, and then I know nothing more until I am in the presence of a throne. There are seats around the throne, and I am pointed to one which is vacant. I am told that it is for me. Then I see a hand, and when I look at it, I see that it is a pierced hand, and it holds a crown over my head. But oh! the weight of glory is so great I cannot bear it, and so I lift it off, and cast it at the foot of the throne, saying, '*Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!*'"

Reader, take to heart this as his last word to you, "'Behold, I come quickly!' Oh, sinner, are you ready for that long eternity? What if it comes to you some day suddenly? Oh, believer, have you done all you would fain do? '*He that winneth souls is wise*'" (Prov. xi. 30).

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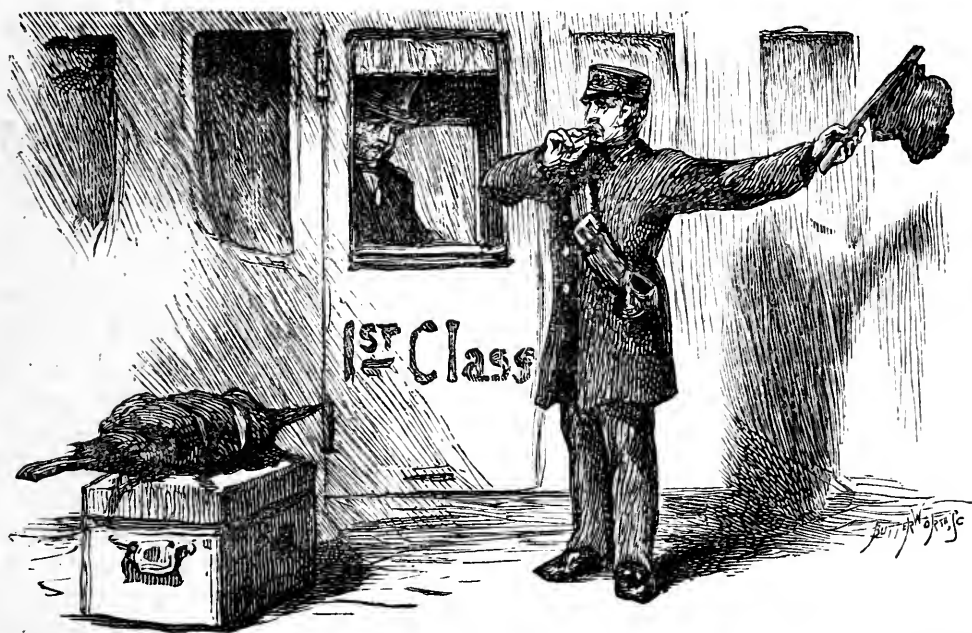
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

SEPTEMBER 1895.

"ALL RIGHT!"



See page 3.

SOME years ago I was invited to conduct a mission in a large country town. At the appointed time I went down the line to my place, and put up at the quarters assigned to me. I was told that the clergyman of the church in which I was to work would call upon me on the Saturday morning. As the gentleman did not appear, I could not help making some inquiries about him, and was told that he was a strange man. One day he would be seen in a long coat; another, in a short shooting-jacket. Sometimes he was galloping away on horseback; and then flying along on a bicycle. One evening he was prostrating himself before his altar; another, he was at a party or a dance.

With all this, however, he was considered to be in earnest.

"A man," said my informant, "who has not yet found what he wants; he is unsettled and restless."

"Perhaps," I suggested, "he does not quite know what it is he wants."

"That may be," was the reply; "for sometimes he is very religiously disposed, and at others we find him disgusted and sarcastic, as if he were disappointed."

Having nothing else to do that morning, I went on to the church to see if there were any signs of preparation. Here I saw he had been very active, for large posters were displayed all around the church, announcing the mission. Attractive invitations were posted about upon the walls and hoardings. Inside the church a number of chairs and benches were stacked ready for use, and mission hymn-books were placed in every pew. All this looked well, and showed that my man intended business. But why did he not come?

I made my way to his house. On calling there, I was told that "master had been called out early in the morning, and had not returned since." No one knew where he was gone, so I gave up the search, and waited in patience for his appearance. All Saturday passed, and yet no clergyman appeared. Late in the evening a note was brought to me, which had been written in the morning, to say that my friend was called away on urgent business, and that as soon as he could he would do himself the honour of waiting upon me, in order to place himself, his church, and district at my disposal for the mission.

On the Sunday morning he was duly announced, and entered hurriedly into the room where I was, in a most agitated state. He said, "I am come to put myself under you;" and then he sat down and buried his face in his hands.

"What is the matter with you?" I inquired kindly. "What is your trouble?"

"Oh, great trouble, great trouble; I cannot tell you yet!"

After a little pause, he lifted up his head, and said, "Now I will tell you. Yesterday morning I was called out of bed to my organist; and you will scarcely believe it, when I went to him he said, 'Oh, sir, I am dying,' and he died while I was in the room! We had been practising hymns with the choir only the night before, and he was apparently in good health. It was a great shock to me.

"After a little while, I set off to N—— to see if I could find another organist for the mission. I just found him in time, for he was going to London. He has promised to come over and be with us, so that is all right. On my way home I had a long talk with the guard of the train at the station. He said, 'We are to have a mission. I am praying that it may be blessed to many souls,—and if I may be so bold, blessed to your soul too.' He had often talked to me about his conversion, as he called it, which certainly had the effect of making him very happy, so that I have frequently longed to know the secret of his joy."

Now there was a pause in the story, and my friend seemed to be in much trouble. He continued: "The guard was very solemn in his conversation with me, and among other things he said, 'Mind, you must be born again. The Lord says so: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7). If anything ever happens to the train and the guard, remember I am all right; sudden death will be sudden glory.'

"In reply to my remarks, he said it was my fault that I was not converted,—the Lord was ready and waiting to save me. He was very

earnest in impressing this fact upon me, and asked if I understood him. Not being satisfied with my answer, he said, 'You will do no good in your parish till you are converted.'

"In due course the train was started, and went on its way. Whenever we stopped at a station the guard came and stood by the open window of the carriage to talk. While he conversed with me he was not unmindful of his work; he held his whistle in his hand, and his eyes were watching for the signal. At the given sign he put out his arm and said, 'All right!' blew a shrill blast with his whistle, and then jumped into his van. At the last station before we reached this place he stood as before by my side, opposite the window of the carriage where I was sitting, whistle in hand. 'Mind, I am praying for you,' he said; and at that instant the sign was given, and he cried, 'All right!' as loud as ever, and put his whistle to his mouth; but before he sounded it I saw him stagger back and fall to the ground. The train had not moved yet, so I jumped out and went to him. Would you believe it? he was dead!"

Here another pause—evidently my poor friend was most distressed, as well he might be.

"I never saw anyone die before," he continued, "and this was the second in one day,—a fine, strong young man, apparently in the prime of life. Oh! it is dreadful,—he went away praying for me! I never knew him so earnest, and all his earnestness and care was about me. I don't know what happened at the station. I was like one stunned. I have his last words, '*All right!*' ringing in my ear. '*All right!*'—he looked like it, for in death he seemed to be only in a sleep.

"In the course of the afternoon I took another train, but, after I alighted from it, as I was walking

home, what do you think happened? You will never guess. You remember it was a very windy afternoon. The wind was blowing hard, and as I walked along I saw a man chasing his hat. He ran very fast before the wind, and I wondered whether he would catch his hat before it went into the canal. Would you believe it? the hat went on, and the man too! He could not stop himself; he fell in, and disappeared in the water, while his hat floated on before the wind. Several persons plunged in after the poor man, but came back without him. Actually he was drowned! Drags were brought as soon as possible, and the body was recovered, but it was lifeless. I had never seen death before, and in one day I saw three persons dead! What does it mean? Oh! I shall go out of my mind! I have not slept all night. I do not know what to do."

My poor friend rose, and began to stagger about the room in a most distressed condition. I led him to the sofa, and bade him lie down and be still, and I would talk with him. I told him that this extraordinary experience was not by chance. "God is speaking loudly to you," I said; "just bow to His will, and yield yourself to Him. Say, 'Who art Thou, Lord? what wouldst Thou have me to do?' One thing is clear, the Lord is calling you in a very remarkable way to seek salvation, and that without delay."

"I don't know what I feel like," he said; "I was wretched last night."

I ventured to ask him, "What did you do when you could not sleep?"

"Well," he replied, "I took my Bible, and opened it at a venture. I fell on a very discouraging text: 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' I did not like that, so I opened again at Matt. xxiii. 13: 'Woe unto you, . . . hypocrites!' I closed the book, and thought I

would pray; but, to tell the truth, I did not know what to pray for, and the prayers I knew did not touch my case."

Poor man, he was in evident perplexity. I told him that God loved him. "He so loved you that He gave His Son for you. Did you ever thank Him for that?" He did not answer.

"The Lord Jesus Christ so loved you, that He shed His blood to wash away your sins. He died that you might live. You have often heard that, and said it too; but did you ever thank Him for His love?"

"No. I am unworthy to do so."

"Yes, that is true; but God knows your unworthiness better than you do, and yet He loves you. Even in the depths of your unworthiness and sinfulness, yet dare to believe in His love to you, and thank Him for it."

After praying with him, we went to church, but I excused him from taking any part in the service. It pleased God to use some words of the sermon to enlighten him, and his soul was soon set at liberty. His joy was unbounded, and during the afternoon he told everyone present what the Lord had done for him, and in the evening service publicly asked the congregation to thank God with him for saving his soul.

The guard's sudden death and the clergyman's conversion had a wonderful effect upon the hearts and minds of the people. The mission received a great impetus, and much blessing was given.

It appeared, upon after inquiry,

that the guard was first awakened under a sermon from this very clergyman. He came into the vestry to say how much the sermon had affected him.

"You have hit me very hard," he said.

"I am sure," replied the clergyman, "I did not intend to hurt your feelings."

The guard would have it, however, that the preacher meant him.

"No, indeed," said the clergyman, "I did not, for I did not write the sermon at all."

Happily, through the more enlightened help of a lady of the congregation, the guard found peace with God, and became a very joyful and consistent believer. He was not content to be saved alone, but did all he could to bring others to the same knowledge of salvation. He could not rest after he had discovered the fact that the clergyman was not converted. "Oh," he said, "that will not do. We must pray and work about this; we cannot get on till the parson is saved."

The man was indeed "all right," and a bright example of the Gospel, at home, abroad, and in the sanctuary too. A fine, strong young man, to all appearance; but taken away suddenly in the discharge of his duty, and uttering the significant words, "All right!"

What a pity it is that we are not all "all right"! What a joy it would be to ourselves, and what a comfort to those who care for us, to know that it is "all right" with us!

REV. W. HASLAM, M.A.

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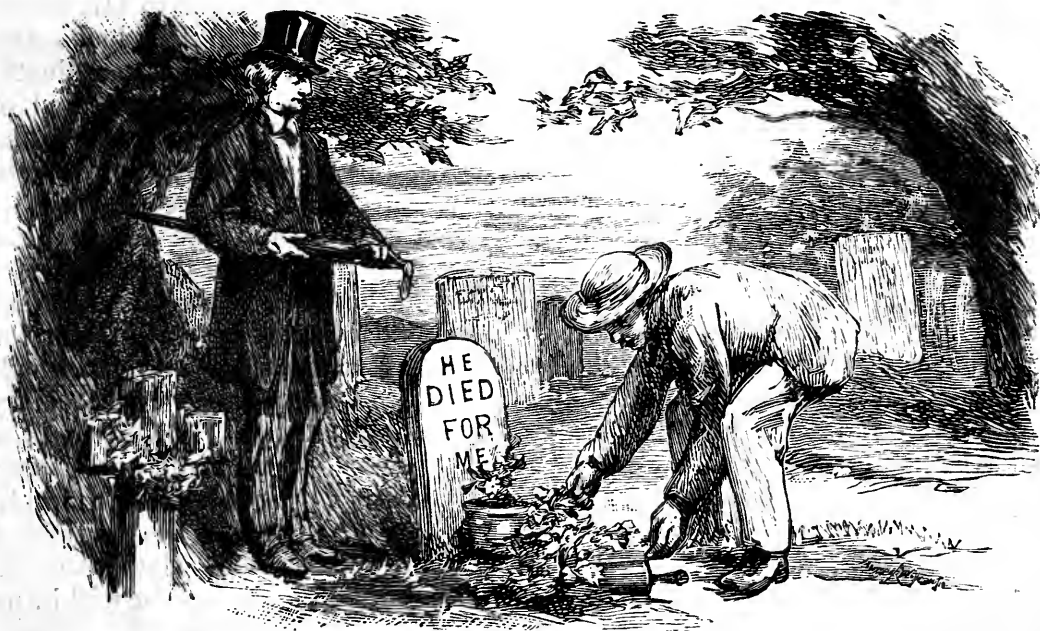
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MONTHLY VISITOR.

OCTOBER 1895.

HE IS OUR PEACE.



See page 4.

WE need peace. Who is to make peace for us? who is to give it to us?

Sin has thrown us out of peace; the thought of guilt is like a load that weighs us down; or like a cloud that hides the face of God. "Oh, sin—sin is just hell!" said one when first made to feel it, and to see it as God sees it. Had there been no sin there would have been no want of

peace; and not till sin is taken out of the way can peace find its way back to us.

Sin is no light thing, though men may call it so. God hates it; God "drove out the man" (Gen. iii. 24) for one sin: God will not let sin alone; nor will He let the man that sins feel as if all were right. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

God only can blot out sin. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 25). He waits to blot it out in the case of all who will take His way of pardon. And in the blotting out of sin there is peace, peace between us and God; peace which comes simply from our knowledge of the peace which was made upon the cross. "He has made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). "He is our peace" (Eph. ii. 14); so that "now in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13). Thus God blots out sin; for thus is He "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26); and the peace which He gives us is a righteous peace; peace springing out of righteousness, and therefore without change or end. If it be not founded on righteousness, it cannot be sure; for sooner or later the law would rise up against us, and our consciences would be always saying to us that we had got pardon and peace at the expense of justice.

We need peace, and God has provided it. We may find it at the cross, where the great Peace-maker died to bring about the reconciliation between us and God. In this peace we have the making up of the estrangement and the removal of the distance between us and God.

Christ has made peace; He has made it by the blood of His cross. That which He did here on earth from His cradle to His cross, from the manger to the tomb, was the making of the peace. His sin-bearing life and death took away that which rendered peace between us and God impossible, and it supplied that which rendered peace a sure and righteous thing; making it a right thing for a holy God to meet us with His love, and a safe thing for unholy men to go to God and obtain from Him all that

they needed. Christ has not merely begun the peace, but He has finished it, leaving no part of it for us to make. He finished it when He died as the bearer of our sins; and He gave the assurance that it was finished by rising from the dead.

Christ is our peace. He that has Christ has peace with God, for in Him is the fulness of peace. Apart from Him peace is impossible, for it would be unholy and unrighteous peace. That which He is, and that which He has done, make up the peace which we need; for He is the peace-offering in virtue of which we are reconciled to God, distance and enmity being alike removed; for through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. He is truly our peace; and everything about Him speaks peace to us. There is peace in His words and deeds, peace in His looks and tones, peace in His life and death. He who knows Him is possessed of that peace which as a sinner he needs, and which he cannot have in any other way. He is at once the Peace-maker and the Peace; the healer of the breach, the remover of the wall between us and God. Take Him and be at peace with God; for God has so provided and purposed, that whilst without Him peace is an impossibility, with Him peace is a certainty—a present and everlasting certainty. Christ in us is not merely the hope of glory, but the possession of a sure and present peace on earth in the midst of all the sin within us and the storms without us.

Christ gives us peace. He gives us Himself, and that is peace. His value as the great Peace-offering has no limit and no end. As often as guilt rests upon our conscience, or comes between us and God, we avail ourselves of that altar on which the Peace-offering lies, and we find it sufficient to renew or to keep up our peace. Christ is both the altar and the offering; and because His blood, as

sprinkled on the altar, cleanseth from all sin, it pacifies the conscience, it takes away the guilt that would break up our intercourse with God. Christ is the giver of peace from first to last; and to Him we come, hour by hour, that the peace may remain unbroken.

The peace which the sinner thus gets from the hand of Him who died and rose again, is a *sure* peace. The *pierced* hand out of which we take it is the pledge of this security, for it tells us that it is founded upon righteousness, and therefore cannot be shaken. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5). In other words, that punishment which we had deserved was laid on Him, and so our peace was made. Unpunished guilt is a fearful thing; for at any moment it may seize us and insist on the payment of the debt, or imprisonment till we have paid the uttermost farthing. But guilt once punished can no more disturb or terrify. It has lost its power to alarm us; for its strength was the law (1 Cor. xv. 56), and the law has been abundantly honoured. Christ has done what we should have done; He has suffered what we should have suffered: and the result of this is a sure and everlasting pardon to every man that believeth—to every sinner that consents to be treated by God on the footing of the sinner's Substitute.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done; not by well-meant resolutions or fervent feelings; not by days and nights of prayer,—but by the blood of the Lamb without spot, is our peace secured; and that which pours into the sinner's soul all the peace which that blood contains is simply *looking*,—"Look unto Me and be ye saved;" or *hearing*,—"Hear, and your soul shall live;" or *believing*,—"He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

Such is the peace which God presents freely to the sons of men! They have not to make their peace

with God, but to take a peace already made. God presses this peace upon your acceptance. It is a free gift to you. Refuse it not. Put not away the peace which has been provided. Reject not the reconciliation. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Do not wait. It needs no waiting. You will never be more ready for it than you are just now. Do not thrust away the divine hand that presses the gift upon you. God is in earnest, and will you be cold? God is sincere, and will you doubt His word? God means what He says, when pleading with you to receive the peace, and will you distrust His grace? It is the hand of love that is stretched out; it is the voice of love that speaks,—will you treat that love as if it had been hatred, and contemptuously turn away? God knows the issues that are at stake, and therefore He is in earnest. He sees that vast eternity which lies before you, of joy or of sorrow, and He will take no denial from you. The measure of His loving earnestness is the length of that endless eternity, and the preciousness of your own immortal soul.

Perhaps you do not feel your need of peace just now. The world is around you with all its ensnaring beauty. The fellowships of family or friendship keep you from realising the estrangement that is between you and God. The daily round of business or of pleasure fills your heart, and you can do without God and His love. But your sky will not be always bright, nor your sea for ever calm. The clouds are coming, and the storm is gathering, and the stroke of the lightning is at hand. Sickness is at your door, with pain and weariness and languor. Disappointments, partings, sorrows, are preparing for you. Or if you should escape all these, the death-bed is not far off; and when it comes, how can you lie down on it without God, without

pardon, without peace? "Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace." Ere the evil days come, take the proffered hand of reconciliation, and let everything between you and God be settled over the blood of the everlasting covenant.

The peace which Christ has made is a holy peace. It does not give men liberty to sin; it sets them free to be holy, and it furnishes the strongest motive to holiness that can be found. Peace with God is of necessity the peace of holiness—the beginning of a holy life—the entrance upon a blessed walk with God like that of Enoch. Its voice is that of the Master: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John viii. 11).

Christ's peace is the peace of love. It springs from love, it speaks of love, it leads to love. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." "We love Him because He first loved us." "The love of Christ constraineth us." The knowledge of what Christ has done for us kindles love in us. If He gave Himself for our sins, what shall we not give Him in return? Shall we not remember Him, and cherish His image in our hearts, till we meet Him face to face, whom not having seen we love?

A traveller in one of the Southern States of America came one day to a new-made grave. He saw a man smoothing the turf and planting flowers, while tears flowed freely from his eyes. "You have lost, I suppose, a beloved wife?" said the

traveller, accosting him. "No," said he, "I have not lost a wife." "Perhaps it is a dear child who lies buried there?" said the stranger again. "No," said the mourner, "I have lost no wife and no child." "Why then are you planting these flowers on that grave, and weeping as you plant them?" "I am doing this for one who died for me." "But how was this?" said the traveller. "I was called," said the mourner, "to serve as a soldier. I had a wife and children. A friend came forward; he said, 'I have no wife and no child; I will go instead of you.' He went, and was mortally wounded. Hearing of this, I went to the hospital where he lay. Ere I reached it he was gone; and here he lies buried. He died for me, and I plant these flowers in memory of his love." Afterwards a tombstone was set up, and on it were carved the simple words—

"HE DIED FOR ME."

Such is the love of man to man, of friend to friend. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend; but God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Shall we not love in return? Shall we not consecrate our lives to Him who gave His life for us? If love can win a heart, surely the sinner's heart must be won? Yet how little is there, even at the best, of any loving requital on our part of this great love of Christ! How few have either accepted His peace, or returned His love!

Those who feel disposed to aid the Society in continuing and extending the gratuitous circulation of these Tracts, are requested to give their Subscriptions or Donations, however small, to the Distributors of the Tracts.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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WHAT THE LARK SANG TO ROBERT MORLEY.



See page 4.

ROBERT MORLEY was a farm labourer in the fens of Cambridgeshire, and a very good sort of a man in his way, though not a religious man. Everybody liked Bob Morley, as they called him.

As to his work, he took a pride in it. If he had to plough a furrow,

he delighted to make it the very straightest that could be made; and if he hoed turnips, he would bend over the work with as much earnest intention to succeed as the greatest genius that ever lived. It is a wonderful sweetener of life when a man loves his work, and buckles

to it as something that he means to do right well. His master knew his worth, as nobody could help doing, and when work grew slack, there was always something for Bob to do. "Honest Bob" was as straightforward as he was obliging and steady.

Bob's home was as happy as any in all the fens. His wife was a thrifty woman, good-tempered and gentle, who knew that a smile and a kind word and the hundred little ways of thoughtful love can make a labourer's cottage happier than all the gold and marble of Solomon's temple could. The children, too, were healthy and bright, sturdy little boys and girls with chubby red cheeks—nice and clean as only such a mother's tidy ways and cheerful influence could make them.

Plainly enough, then, Bob had nothing to fret himself about. He had far too much sense to go near the public-house. Between them, it came about that Bob and his wife managed to buy their own freehold cottage and bit of garden. Little wonder that he went whistling to his work, and looked the whole world in the face as an honest man.

What more could anybody want?

Well, there was one thing more that he wanted, and this it was that the lark sang to him.

Early one morning he left his home and stepped out into the lane that led to his work. It was in the spring. The dewy freshness of the early day hung over everything, over the few flowers that had peeped out, and over the buds of the trees; it sparkled like glistening diamonds on the grass and the hedgerows; while up through the thin white mist there crept the crimson sun. Suddenly a lark sprang from near by, and rose soaring into the sky, pouring out its floods of melody.

All else was hushed—not a sound was there but this rich music of the bird. He watched it rising higher as

the music softened—watched it until it hung a mere speck in the heavens, and only now and then a faint note of its song could reach him—watched it, almost breathless, until it had gone out of sight and hearing.

"There," he said to himself, as he moved on again, "that is beautiful;" and the music rang yet in his soul as he passed along the quiet lane. "It has gone praising God for the light of another day."

Then suddenly a thought broke on him—a conviction that confused and bewildered him—*I have not bowed my knee to God! I have not thanked Him! I have not served Him!*

All through the day this thought kept pressing itself upon him. "The bird cannot know God," he muttered; "I can. I am made and sent into this world on purpose to love Him. I have served myself, but my God I have forgotten. That bird has put me to the blush! Ay, and for that matter everything else might do it as far as I can see! Bird and beast, flower and tree, wind and cloud, the very clods—they all just do what they were made for. I, with sense to understand things, with a heart to love God, and with a soul that is to live for ever, *I am the only thing that doesn't!*"

He came home, but he sat that night strangely thoughtful and quiet.

Supper was over, the children were asleep in bed, and the wife was ironing at the table, and Robert sat looking into the fire.

"Click, click," went the heater in the box, and the goodwife paused in the song she was singing, to smooth and lay by the clothes that were finished. Now she came to the fire for another iron.

"Come, Bob, my lad, you're strangely quiet to-night. There's nothing amiss, is there?" she asked, half playfully and half in earnest.

He lifted his face towards hers, and looked with such seriousness as she

had scarcely ever seen in him. "Ay, there is that, wife, and has been this long time," he said gravely.

"Whatever can you mean?" and Annie put down the iron, and laid her hand anxiously on his shoulder.

"We neither of us have been doing our duty, Annie, neither you nor me," said Bob, as he looked again into the fire.

"Who dare say so of you, Bob?" she cried indignantly, as her face flushed crimson, and her eyes sparkled. "Never a man can charge you with anything wrong, whatever I may be. There's no truth in it, Bob," and her voice regained its tenderness; "don't you mind, there's not a word of truth in it."

"'Tis true enough, and I say it of us both," said Robert, quietly and sadly—"of us *both*," he repeated, without looking up.

Annie could only look in troubled wonder as a hundred vague guesses hurried through her mind. She waited patiently for Robert's explanation.

"We have not done our duty to our Master," he went on, as if talking to himself.

"But, Robert!"—cried Annie, as she stepped back in amazement.

"Nor to our King," Robert went on, as if he had not heard the interruption.

"King!"—cried Annie in trouble. Were they all going to jail, then?

"Nor to our Best Friend," continued Robert.

Annie was bewildered into silence.

"You see," Robert explained, after a long pause, and looking up at last—"you see, I can't help thinking that God made you and me, wife, for something more than work and wages and home; to plough and eat and sleep and die is not all that we were sent into the world for. *God made us*, that's certain; and He made us the same as He made everything else, to *serve Him*; and that, Annie, you and I have forgotten—clean forgotten."

Robert sank again into silence. Annie went on with her ironing, but no song kept time now to the click of the iron. Strange memories began to wake up within her—memories that had been sleeping since she was a little girl, when the godly old grandmother had taught her of the Father's love in Jesus Christ, and that in Him there is forgiveness for us all, and grace to help us to do right—memories out of which there sprang many desires and resolutions.

But desiring and resolving could not satisfy Robert. He had sinned against God, and he must be forgiven, and till then he could find no rest. He turned to the Bible, but it only made him feel more condemned. The words that met him, turn where he would, were such as these: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*"—"Depart from me"—"*The unprofitable servant cast into outer darkness.*" The words startled him in his sleep, and were ringing in his ears at his work. For him there seemed no hope, no mercy. His misery increased for many days, until it became intolerable. At last, one morning he was thrashing wheat in the barn, flinging the flail over his shoulder. His companion was an old soldier of the Cross. He saw that something was amiss with Bob, and had long prayed that he might be led to the Saviour. When the dinner-hour came, the old labourer sat by his side in the shadow of the straw rick. "Bob," said the old man, "'tis my opinion as there be one thing you'd sooner have than all the world beside. And there's no reason why you can't have it now an' here. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, and lived and died for one man's sins—an' that man's name were Bob Morley." Bob started. He had not thought of that. "*Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man*"—that's true, isn't it?"

Bob nodded his head.

"Why, then," said the old labourer in his slow drawl, "then bless Him, Bob, for He died for you." The light dawned more clearly on Bob's mind, the light that led him to the Lamb. He accepted the crucified Saviour as his Redeemer, and with glad thanksgiving he gave utterance to the new song that had been put into his mouth; with all his heart he clung to the Lord Jesus. Now he could praise God with the lark, and as he saw it soaring into the light, his own soul rose higher, and he rapturously sang—

"The op'ning heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
If Jesus shows His mercy mine,
And whispers I am His.

"My soul would leave this heavy clay
At that transporting word;
Run up with joy the shining way,
To see and praise my Lord."

The lanes rang with his praises—and with the glad tidings of his own glorious deliverance, he came home to lead his wife to the Saviour until she could rejoice with him in this joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Soon after his conversion all the symptoms of consumption began to show themselves. For many weeks he endured a lingering affliction with the utmost fortitude and cheerful resignation.

One morning he suddenly became worse. It was evident that he could not last long. His friends gathered about his bedside, and one of them repeated the lines—

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken the
skies,
Or hide for a moment the Lord from
my eyes."

He looked up with a happy smile, and very faintly replied, "*Not a cloud, not a doubt.*"

Then, in the glad dawn of that spring morning, his spirit fled home, singing as it went upwards to the realms of eternal day.

At his funeral, in the stillness—that cold, deathlike stillness, as the widow and her fatherless children looked into the grave, and once more felt their loss in all its bitterness—there suddenly rose a lark into the sky, and poured such a flood of rapturous melody that it forced all to hear it. It broke the spell of the grave, and the little company turned to leave. Annie lifted her red and swollen eyes to the bird as it rose heavenward. "Ah," she whispered to herself, "he is not here; he, too, is risen." And her thoughts passed away into the light and joy whither he had entered. Days of trouble and difficulty lay before Annie—days in which her way was beset with clouds—but whatever trouble came, it was always like a ray from heaven, like the whispered "Fear not" of an angel, as she heard the glad music of the soaring lark.

"In darkest shades, if Thou appear,
My dawning is begun;
Thou art my soul's bright Morning Star,
And Thou my rising Sun."

Dear reader, what are you living for?

*By permission from "Short Stories and other Papers,"
by Rev. MARK GUY PEARSE.*

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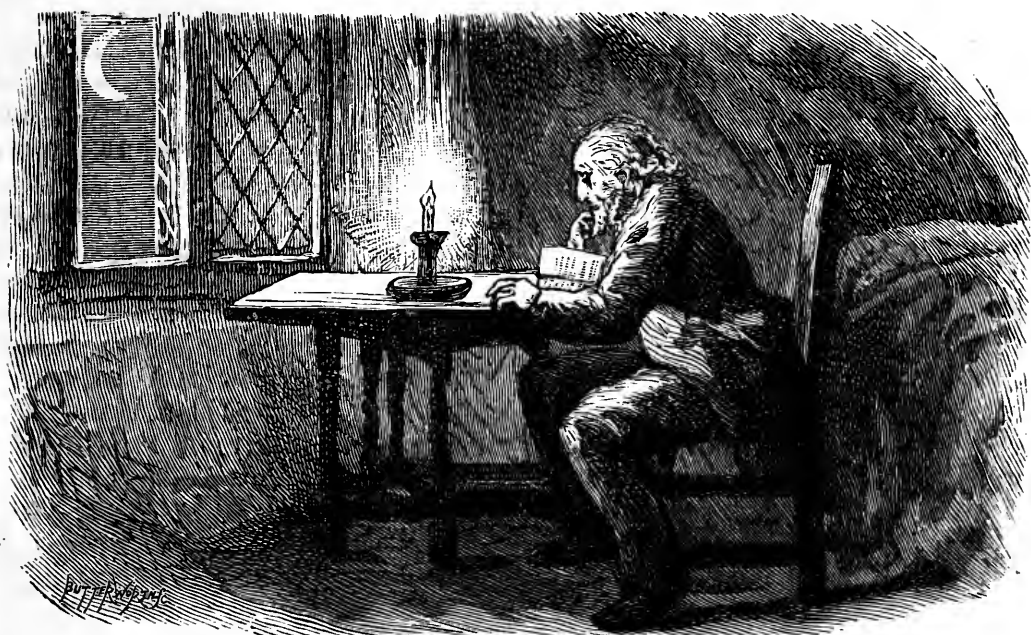
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“THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT.”



I MIGHT take these words as simply words of warning referring to the swift lapse of time. I might say, Life is drawing near its close; time is making haste to be gone; years are vanishing, one after another; the long eternal age will soon roll in upon us. Therefore let us be ready. There must be no trifling

—no delaying; the matter in hand is of far too much moment to be forgotten, or laid aside even for a day.

But let me be more explicit. Let us look at these words in connection with others, to which they are both like and unlike.

While the servant here says, “The night is far spent,” the Master says,

"The night cometh." What does this mean? Are there two nights? Are there two mornings?

There are.

This is the world's day, but it is the Church's night; for the world lieth in wickedness, and its prince is the ruler of the darkness of this world. In other words, this is the time of the wicked's triumph and prosperity. That which cometh is the day of the Church's glory. To the child of God the apostle would say—Your night is far spent; your day is at hand. To the children of this present evil world he would say—Your day is about to close, and the long, long, everlasting night is about to fall upon you.

In reference to all this, I would ask one question, and I would put it in three ways:—

I. IF I BE IN CHRIST — WHAT THEN? I am safe, whatever this coming year may bring; nay, my *night* is far spent, my *day* is at hand. The wilderness is nearly traversed; Canaan and Jerusalem are almost within my view; the summits of the everlasting hills are already appearing. What manner of person, then, ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God!

I must press forward; and so much the more as I see the day approaching, I must be consistent and heavenly-minded, so walking worthy of my calling, and setting my affection on things above. For what have I, who have a crown in prospect, a kingdom in reversion, to do with the vanities or pleasures of this poor and passing world? My eye is above; my treasure is in heaven: shall not my heart be there also? If I am in Christ, I must seek to be like Him, and to follow Him more and more closely, as the night is hastening to an end, and the day about to break. If I

am in sorrow, I shall call to mind that weeping endureth but for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. If I am in comfort, I must see that this prosperity which God has given me is making me a holier man, and a more self-denying worker for Him who loved me and washed me from my sins in His own blood. If I am poor, I shall rejoice that my day of wealth is just at hand. If I am rich, I shall take this gold which my Lord has given me, and lay it all at His beloved feet. Mine must be no half discipleship—no service of two masters—no divided heart. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. What remains of this brief life of mine must be given wholly to the Lord.

II. IF I BE NOT IN CHRIST —WHAT THEN? It is not *day*, but *night* that is at hand for me—THE NIGHT beyond which there is no morning, and in which there is no star. If I live out of Christ, I live the life of danger and heaviness and gloom. If I die out of Christ, I die the death of darkness, and enter on the blackness of darkness for ever.

With such peril in front of me, can I remain heedless? Can I plunge into pleasure? Can I jest with the jester, or riot with the riotous, drowning the dread sense of the dark future in the world's jovial mirth? Can I dance in the ballroom, or applaud in the theatre, or waste my evening hours at the card-table, so long as my soul is in danger, and my eternity a dismal blank? If I be not in Christ, I must betake myself at once, and just as I am, to Him who receiveth sinners, however great, and biddeth them welcome; however late they come. He willeth not my death: He asks me to turn and live. He pitieth me with a pity as sincere and honest as it is divine. He sees my hunger and thirst and nakedness in the far country of the pro-

digal. He yearns over me with the most fatherly of all yearnings. He points to the plenteous table in the paternal mansion I had so ungratefully forsaken. He beckons me to come in. He sends out His ambassadors in quest of me, and they beseech me to return, with all the assurance that the great oath of God can give, that I shall be received and pardoned; that I shall be clothed, and fed, and loved, and blest. Shall I not then at once arise and go to my Father, saying, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, in the fullest confidence of a loving reception, with the certainty of having that fulfilled in me which is written—"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him"?

III. IF I BE UNCERTAIN WHETHER I BE IN CHRIST—WHAT THEN? I must have this uncertainty brought to an end. I cannot remain in doubt, lest perchance I die with words upon my lips such as those which once darkened a deathbed—"I am going, and I don't know whither!" Life is not life till I get hold of Him who alone is life. Vanity becomes doubly vain when I know not but that it may be succeeded with lamentation and mourning and woe. Time is sweeping on, and I must make sure. The great future of a soul stands before me, and I cannot bear the thought that the future should be to me unmingled woe.

But how can a sinner get beyond uncertainty? Have any ever done so? And will it not require a whole lifetime to make sure?

I find it written in the eternal Book—the Book of Him who cannot lie, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts ii. 21). These words are for all ages and all men, so that I know that in calling upon the name of the

Lord I am saved. For the message is clear. The promise is absolute and unconditional. It is as untrammelled as it is glorious. Who am I, then, that I should say—I have called upon the name of the Lord, but I know not whether I am saved?

Again, I find it written in the same eternal Book—and the words have never been erased or belied—"He that believeth is not condemned" (John iii. 17); "He that believeth is justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39); "He that believeth hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). Who, then, am I, that in the face of divine words like these—words which cannot be broken—should say, I believe, but I know not whether I am justified? Would this be doing justice to the truth or to the truthfulness of God? Would it not be adding something to and taking something from that perfect word? Can I, unless I alter the meaning of the plainest words ever written down for human eyes to read, and for human hearts to receive, venture to say—I believe, but I remain as uncertain as ever?

There stands the testimony, as legible as it is infallible—"Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, died, and was buried, and rose again, the just for the unjust."

Side by side with this testimony there stands the promise, steadfast and unalterable, of which we may say that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of it shall not pass away"—"*Believe, and THOU SHALT BE SAVED.*"

Shall I not regard these two things as inseparable; the testimony and the promise, and take the peace which that union gives? Or shall I put asunder what God has joined together? Is not the record true? Is not the promise true?

When the Holy Spirit opens the

eye, does He not simply show these two inseparable things, and teach the sinner the bearing which they have upon his eternal welfare?

He does not say—See, yonder is the cross, and here is something in you which I have wrought: look at both, and you will get peace. He says—Look at that cross alone. See the brazen serpent; see the uplifted Christ; that is all you need for healing and for gladness. Looking unto Jesus is the beginning, and middle, and end of all that you desire.

How much of the uncertainty of which many complain arises from their unwillingness to take the words of the Holy Ghost just as they are! Yet if my soul is to be set at rest, it must be by the simple reception of that naked gospel which the apostles preached, and which it was the primitive taste to rejoice in. Shall I assume the imperfection of the gospel, or the inexactness of the language in which it has been written down for me? Shall I say that the words don't altogether mean what they seem, but something more or something less? Shall I thus make myself wiser than God, and correct His language, lest the glad tidings should be too glad and free—too simple, too blessed?

Shall I try to mend the message, and by mending it make void the Cross and set aside the free love of God? Shall I say that the finished work is unfinished, and that I must finish it by my prayers and tears? Shall I set such a value upon my own poor act of faith, that I must add it to what the Son of God has

done ere I can venture to say I am forgiven?

If I receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; and this is the testimony that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Shall I refuse the testimony, and so reject the life? or shall I receive the testimony, and yet put away from the life what the promise, or rather the Promiser, has annexed to the reception of it?

I have no time to lose. Death may be near. The Lord is coming. Years are rushing past. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Hear the word of the Lord: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely;" "This is that bread that came down from heaven, that a man (or more truly, that ANY MAN) may eat thereof and not die." Let these words—*any man!*—ANY MAN!—ANY MAN!—go forth to all the children of men round and round the globe, till every son of Adam be made to feel that, in sending out the embassy of peace, God meant to beseech *him*, whoever he be, to be reconciled and saved; and that if he dies, he dies not because God refused to save him, but because he refused to be saved by God; not because the blood of Christ could not cleanse him, but because he refused to be cleansed; not because the Holy Spirit was denied him, but because he resisted the Spirit, and thrust away His loving hand.

Rev. HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

FEBRUARY 1896.

"LIKE A CRUSADER."

A SKETCH OF A.L.O.E.: CHARLOTTE MARIA TUCKER.



CHARLOTTE MARIA, daughter of birth, the Isle of St. George, in the Henry St. George Tucker, was born near London on May 8, 1821. She was of a hardy and high-spirited race, closely connected with both East and West Indies. Her father was named after the place of his

birth, the Isle of St. George, in the Bermudas. Early in life he showed the dauntless pluck which characterised his children. While receiving education in England, and being then only fourteen years of age, he was sent to India, an almost penni-

less adventurer, to push his fortune, and rose, through manly and honest striving, to a high position in the Bengal Civil Service.

He was an example of old-fashioned courtesy, which he had learned at home; and he told how his mother was at pains to assure him, when he left for England, that it was not necessary to take off his hat to every person he met in the streets of London. "But habit is strong," he says, speaking in later years; "and even now, when I repair to the stable for my horse, I interchange bows with the coachman and the ostlers, and all the little idle urchins whom I encounter in the mews."

This courtesy was also the characteristic of his daughter, the subject of this sketch. Like her father, witty, fond of games, full of fun, full of gay spirits and laughter, she was like him in devout feeling also. It is said of him that deep and true religion was apparent in every inch of his career. Her life, like his, was "one long stretch of usefulness."

With mirror and hand-glass, early in her girlhood, she examined her features, and resolved that, since she never could be pretty, she would try to be good, and prove a blessing to the world. No heroine ever carried out noble resolve more faithfully than she did this.

When laid out after her death, it was noticed that her aged face wore an unfamiliar aspect, massive, powerful, determined, singularly like the face of the Duke of Wellington, whom she personally knew, and greatly admired; but never in life-time had any such resemblance been seen in her countenance. One standing beside her bier remarked that she looked "like a crusader." In this way the firm, brave, heroic spirit, which she kept in reserve, but was moved by in secret throughout her long life, rose and asserted itself in her features after her decease.

One of her brothers speaks of her as "always religious"; but she herself, writing in middle life to her sister, says: "I was about fifteen when the feeling of being His—of indeed having the Saviour as *my own* Saviour—came upon me like a flood of daylight. I have never *quite* lost the light shed on me then, and now it brightens all the future."

From her childhood she had great facility in literary composition; and the poems, stories, plays, comic and tragic, which she wrote for the amusement of the home circle were very numerous. Thus were her powers sharpened for the service so sacredly rendered in after years, to multitudes of young people especially, in this and other lands. Her object was to make Christ known to the young. In this her success was so great, that you could hardly find a child who had not been charmed by the writings of A.L.O.E., the title which she assumed, signifying "a Lady of England."

Her life-work was chiefly done in the Punjab district of India. Many ties bound her to that land. Her father had won distinction there. Four of her brothers fought there during the Mutiny of 1857; one of whom, Robert, a judge, fell heroically whilst at his post of duty, the only European among countless hostile natives. He was a most devoted volunteer helper to the missionary cause, and was known to say, "If every hair upon my head were a life, it would be too little to sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ!"

It was in this spirit, eighteen years after, his sister Charlotte went to India, never to return. She was then fifty-four years of age, thin and delicate-looking, but wiry and full of energy, both of body and soul. She went at her own cost, to do Zenana work for Christ, and in the simplest possible way to enrich the literature of India with the gospel.

The eighteen years spent there were the most fruitful of her life.

Like an old missionary whom she met, she did not "believe in age." She went as a soldier obeying "marching orders." Amid dangers of the sea, it calmed her to think she could not sink lower than the hollow of her Father's hand. On board, no one could withstand her genial, loving ways; and it was a sight to be remembered, to see her gathering the young fellows round the piano, while she led off in some old English ditty.

Her place of residence was first Amritsar, and then Batala. She began at once with immense toil to learn the native languages, and train herself to think and feel and speak as the natives did. Her mind was of Oriental type, and could easily express itself in the manner of parable and allegory which the people loved.

The grey-haired white lady was a surprise to them, and they thought she must be a hundred years old. It was the hair which gave this impression, not any failing in activity; for one on the spot describes her as "tall, slight, with lofty brow, sparkling eye, face constantly beaming with love and intelligence; genius in every look; figure frail and fairy-like, agile and graceful; very brisk movements and light tread."

She became one with the people in every possible way; began to sit on the floor as natives do; and at Indian gatherings or feasts, she would not only sit as they sat, but would share their food. Her residence was an old Sikh palace, haunted by owls, bats, and rats; the winds blew through many chinks in the uncurtained doors; and the house was once likened to Eden, because four streams flowed through it. However, she herself speaks of it as "wondrously comfortable."

Writing to a friend, she says: "I will give you a kind of rough idea

of what is said and done, after my duli (box carriage) has stopped at the door of one of the four Zenanas now open to us at Batala. I will suppose C. M. T. alone, as she sometimes is.

"C. M. T. gets out of her box, and enters,—perhaps mounting a small, rather dark staircase. Presently she finds herself in a place where there are perhaps a dozen or twenty women and children.

"C. M. T. smiles, says 'Salaam,' and informs her who seems the chief woman that she is happy to see her. A bed, or perhaps an arm-chair, is politely put for C. M. T. to sit down on. She begins by showing off a clockwork figure that can walk. Women and children look on with curiosity and pleasure. Says C. M. T.: 'The doll is cleverer than the idols, it can walk.' The house being Mohammedan, the observation is approved of; and C. M. T. amuses the good folk by a few lively remarks as to the doll being weak or tired.

"Then C. M. T. says: 'I have made a very long journey from Europe by sea. I have come thousands of miles. Why have I come?' Silence amongst my auditors. 'I have come to give good news.' They listen with interest. 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. This is good news. We are all sinners. He died for us.' None look angry. Some look pleased. Some look tenderly at me, as if they thought me very kind to come such a long way to give them good news.

"Then a Bible picture-book is opened; perhaps the story of the Fall read. Mohammedans believe a great deal of the Old Testament; one can talk to them of Father Adam and Mother Eve without shocking them in the least. I cannot talk much, very little indeed; but I can say such things as I have written above, and tell the dear women that I am happy, that I do not fear death

at all, because I believe that the Lord bore the punishment of my sins on the cross."

Ever busy, never weary, and often called on to go up to the hills on duty, she describes her experiences in letters full of unction and of fun. She thinks man should be called "a packing animal," as well as the one that laughs and cooks; for neither birds nor beasts—except the elephant—have anything to do with filling trunks! She is in great glee over the Scotch minister's reply to a gushing lady, who unsolicited offered him her purse, her hand, and her heart;—it was this: "I advise you to give your heart to God, your purse to the poor, and your hand to him who asks for it."

She speaks of a Brahmin who had no idea of *sin*; he had *never seen it*, he said,—as if it were a thing like a stone or a tree! But afterwards he was very attentive; showed child-like readiness to listen; and his face shone with pleasure when talked to about the Saviour. One's time, one's money, one's efforts, she says, seem to go farther here. "I have often thought India is the place to make the one talent—ten. The work is so very great, the labourers so few." Again she says: "I am quite serene if I do not see a white face for months. As to earthly blessings, they abound; the natives are my real friends. The Lord gives abundant grace, and cheers me with His presence; and I have such joy in the companionship of my Bible."

Thus, year by year, she toiled on

for Christ, visiting and writing her little books, which found welcome everywhere in India and England. She began to feel old, but never languid. At one time, in severe illness, she had an intense desire to depart; and when the doctor plainly intimated to her that she could not live, it so uplifted her in spirit that from that moment she began to get well again, and lived in active service for eight years afterwards! "I have felt," said she, "that a beautiful Wing has been spread over me, which is lined with down and stitched with gold; and I am quite safe."

On Nov. 13, 1893, she was stricken with her last illness. She said: "I am dying. I know it. I am very happy, —in perfect peace,—without a doubt or a care,—but I have none of the rapturous feelings of triumph which I have rather looked forward to." Then she added: "It is best as it is."

On Dec. 2, when the end came, there was only a soft breathing of the word "Quickly, quickly!"—a lifting of the eyelid, and an upward look, as if she saw something which others could not see. Over her grave they sang her favourite hymn: "For ever with the Lord."

It was her steadfast prayer and effort that every poor sinner might be led to the Saviour, to trust Him, to love and serve Him. In your case, reader, may her prayer be answered, and the Saviour's own call at once responded to: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out" (John vi. 37).

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CLIFTON BRIDGE.



SOME few years ago, standing at Clifton, near the city of Bristol, and admiring the striking and beautiful scenery of that place, I saw a parable before me. Thus God speaks in nature and providence! There were two high precipitous cliffs facing one another, with a deep chasm between them, and a narrow river was flowing far below. The opposite cliff and "Nightingale Valley" were in sight. You might see people walking there; you might call to the other side, and receive a response; but you could not cross over. Thus, thought I, God may call to us, and we on Him. He sees us, and we see, or think we see, something of Him; but how

shall we find a *way of access to Him*? Our attempt to cross over must inevitably end in falling into the depth, and sinking into the dark river!

In those days you might have seen two unfinished towers, or piers, of an intended bridge, but the plan seemed to have been abandoned or deferred, so many years had it remained in this state. Now there is a beautiful bridge across the chasm, and the opposite cliff, which before was so far off, is brought near, and the way of access is plain and open. It is not a matter of imagination, or sentiment, or theory, but a simple fact. People may come and see, and, what is better, actually pass over to the other side. Supposing a man's life and liberty depended on reaching the other shore, or, at any rate, in escaping from this one, what a benefit is this bridge!

We are, by nature, in the power of Satan, and under a sore captivity; we are debtors, who have nothing to pay our debt with; prisoners, with no means of ransom. Our sins have brought us into bondage to our enemy, and under sentence of condemnation, but in His infinite love God has found a ransom to save us from going down to the pit. He has given His Son, His only Son, whom He loved, to make that atonement and satisfaction which was necessary to redeem us; and, blessed be God, He has made full satisfaction! He has *finished* the work, and now a way is opened to us, through Jesus, as the door and the way to that God for whom we were created, and for whose pleasure we were endowed with powers which enable us, above and beyond all other creatures of His hand, to adore and worship Him with intelligent service. Christ, as God's representative to us, and as our representative before God, is the bond of union, who, by His divine nature touching God, and by His human nature touching man; is be-

come the way of intercourse—the *only one*—between God and man, *the one Mediator*. As such He is our way of access to God—the wondrous Bridge which God has made over the otherwise impassable gulf!

In a general way, people who profess and call themselves Christians assent to all this, as they do to statements about the effects of the fall of man, but do they realise it? How can we tell whether they do or not? How can we ascertain whether our religion is real, or whether it is only sentimental and intellectual? Very simply and easily, if we will *be true and candid* with ourselves. God, who loves candour and truth, is ever ready and willing to help us, as Satan, our enemy, who loves deceit and lying, is ever ready to mislead. But we may be thankful, He who is for us is greater far and mightier than he that is against us. I said, if we will be true to ourselves,—supposing we desired to escape from a place of fatal danger to a place of safety, being assured there is such a place, and, moreover, that it is a place of joy and blessedness,—how should we act, if we were informed of a way freely opened from bondage to liberty, from misery and death to joy and life? Let us be true to ourselves, and judge ourselves, not by what we think, or wish, or intend, but by what we do!

Reader, how would you think of me if I did not avail myself of that way of deliverance, which had been thus provided for me, at great cost and sacrifice, for my good?

Thus it is God is now regarding us. He knows we are born in sin, and that by nature we love sin, but He knows also He has found a remedy and a Saviour for us; and, reader, He knows whether you are actually come to that one and only Saviour, whether you really believe in Him or not!

It is a very solemn and serious thing when a person does not believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ; for, truly, "he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18).

The Word of God recognises but two great classes amongst men,—those who have believed God's record concerning Christ, and who are, consequently, "*justified by faith*"; and those who have not believed, and are, consequently, exposed to all the sentence of wrath revealed from heaven against such. You may know them by their actions. Those who really believe in Christ as the way of escape and access to God, are *in the way*, like people passing on a bridge, while others (in all love and faithfulness be it said) are persons who are neglecting Christ, the true and living way, and are either doing their best to *make a way for themselves*, or who, while they profess to know better, nevertheless content themselves with admiring and speaking of the way which has been made, *without availing themselves of it*. One of these classes we will call *bridge builders*, and the other *bridge admirers*. Who are they?

Bridge builders are a very earnest and sincere, and devout and devoted class, that is to say, the really best among them; they do earnestly desire to worship God and dedicate themselves and their all to Him. They have zeal for God, though it is not according to knowledge, for they know not the righteousness of God, and therefore they are going about to establish their own righteousness. My heart's desire and prayer to God for such is, that they may be saved, but in the meantime we know they are lost, for they have nothing but their tears of repentance and their prayers, and their obedience, their good works and their offerings, and sacrifice and worship, to recommend them to God. Whether they be Rationalists or Sacramentalists,

they are not resting *on Christ*. These things are not blood, and only blood can make atonement for the soul. Practically they are people who are building a bridge for themselves, and do not believe in *the one* which has been built for them. How can such escape hereafter who neglect the great salvation which has been declared to us by Christ Himself, and confirmed to us by them that heard Him? They are doing their best to save themselves, and trying to recommend themselves to God by their good works and better intentions, and *manifestly* they are working *for* life, instead of *from* life. They are not on the Bridge which God has made, and they are *not in Christ*, and therefore, with all their goodness, they are *Christless*—lost!

They are poor lost ones at the best, and, what is worse, utterly unconscious of danger! Oh, that they could see that man cannot propitiate God or bridge the gulf, and that they must perish at last, and all their works with them! But oh, what goodly stones and precious gems there are in some of their structures! What care, what earnestness, what conscientious, and scrupulous, and exact devotion and sacrifice; but, notwithstanding all these, the word is gone forth from the Saviour Himself, with tears He spoke it: "Not one stone shall be left on another." A holy God, who is very jealous for the honour of the one offering and atonement once made for ever, will drive the ploughshare of His wrath through the very ground in which their goodly building stands. He is jealous for the honour of His Son and for the propitiation which has been made, and He calls us to exalt Jesus, whom He has Himself exalted and given Him a name above every other, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

There is no salvation by works, nor can there be, for salvation is of the Lord through Jesus Christ. Reader, are you *saved*? God has given salvation as a gift: have you received it? Are you on the bridge? Be sure the bridge that God made can bear you, and, moreover, it cannot mislead you. Receive the gift, and draw near to God in full assurance of faith and with a true heart, and then praise and worship Him in word and deed; and be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and you shall know that your labour is never in vain in the Lord.

The other class of unbelievers—bridge admirers—perplex me much; they are inexcusable beyond expression, and responsible in an awful degree; for they know and profess that salvation is not by works, and that indeed it is a "fond and vain thing" to attempt to build a bridge for saving ourselves when God has already made a perfect one for us; but what do they? They admire the plan, they praise the construction, they sing of grace and free salvation, while they are not saved themselves, their sins are not pardoned, and their souls are in jeopardy.

There are places in that valley or chasm at Clifton, where visitors sit down to admire and view the bridge, and there are many thousands, they tell me, who go to see; but ah, how many thousands there are who go to hear the gospel, and sing the hymns of the gospel, and hear the good

news of salvation through the blood of Jesus, who yet remain *unsaved*, and are not afraid! They have received the gospel and stand in it,—for confessedly they are evangelical,—but they are not saved by it. The true gospel is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that *believeth*, but not to those who only assent to it in their minds. Reader, judge yourself, I pray you. Are you on the bridge? are you a bridge builder, or are you a bridge admirer? Indeed, one cannot help feeling that the evangelical unbeliever is in far greater danger than the *working* unbeliever. Oh, what a glorious path has God opened to us in Christ for loving, thankful, and grateful devotion! The ascent to the house of the Lord which Solomon made overwhelmed the Queen of Sheba; but what shall we say to this one, which has been made for us, selfish, wilful, perverse sinners? Oh, wondrous love of God, to make a way of ascent for us, though we have rebelled against Him! We are debtors to Him now, not for sin,—for this debt has been paid,—but for love, and grace, and mercy; and thankfully and lovingly should we endeavour to discharge this debt, by presenting ourselves, body and soul and spirit, to be a living sacrifice to Him, by acknowledging, in word as well as in deed, the praises of Him who is worthy to be praised, till we all come to appear before Him in glory! "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

REV. WM. HASLAM, M.A.

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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THE RICH MAN'S POVERTY.



See page 3.

MR. H. looked, as the saying is, "every inch a gentleman." His manners were as courteous to his inferiors as pleasant with his equals; and everybody thought well of him. He was an elderly man, but so vigorous and mirthful that few remembered the fact when in his presence. It was long since he had settled down in

his "beautiful home in the West." He had been accustomed to travel, and felt restless for change.

That is how it happened that Mr. H. took up his residence for a while at a family boarding-house at a seaside place, in the month of February 187—.

"Only for a week or two," he had

said when selecting rooms for himself and motherless daughter. "I am bound to be off again immediately." However, he grew more than usually at his ease with the residents at Manor House; and Maud felt sure for once that her father was bound to settle down for a few weeks, and she was not disappointed.

One Sunday evening, early in March, Mr. H. was inquiring for Miss Alice James, to whom they had generally looked to play the hymns, which all were in the habit of singing between coming home from church and supper-time.

"Oh, do you not know she is holding a Bible class for sailors to-night?" said an elderly lady, adjusting her spectacles in readiness for the hymn, some one having taken a seat at the open piano prepared to play the accompaniment.

"A Bible class!" he exclaimed, in unfeigned astonishment. "You don't mean to say that *that* merry-hearted girl is religious?"

"And why not, sir?" said a young man warmly.

"Because, sir," answered Mr. H. quickly, "a religious young lady—at least one given to Bible classes—is generally as solemn as a judge, and is more given to serious smiles than merry, musical laughter. I like to give religious people a pretty wide berth; and I vow, if Miss Alice James is one of that sort, I have been entirely thrown off my guard."

His remarks were cut short by the arrival at that moment of the young lady herself.

"I am so sorry to be late," she pleaded, and took the seat vacated for her at the piano.

The hymns were sung with much reverence and fervour by the many; only a few joined in as of necessity, and because of that with more voice than heart. Of the latter was Mr. H. He had a good tenor voice;

but the hymns sung had no real meaning to him.

The supper bell interrupted the singing. Miss Alice James suggested they should close with—

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;" adding—

"It is so nice with our heart and voice to proclaim our thanksgiving."

Mr. H. helped her to close the piano, and they passed together from the drawing-room to the supper-room.

"Why did you not invite me to your Bible class to-night?" he asked, with a smile.

"Because it was for the poor—not the rich," said Alice James.

"Perhaps the rich need it more than even the poor do," replied Mr. H. meditatively.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Alice; "I fear my remark sounded a little rude. Please forgive me. I did not know you would have cared for a Bible meeting—for such it was. Some thirty or forty sailors,—old men and lads,—all eager to learn something which would lead them nearer the kingdom of heaven."

"And they were happy in having you to teach them, Miss James," said Mr. H. "Your face proclaims that religion with you is at least no dark and dreary matter."

"How could it be dark or dreary," said Alice, "when it gathers its life from a Presence in which there is 'fulness of joy'—'pleasures for evermore'?"

"I see," was his reply; "it is all clear to you. I have never yet begun thinking of religion as more than going to church, and saying the confession over slowly and reverently, taking one's part in the Psalms for the day, and giving a fair amount of attention to the rest of the service. My religion always lies between the covers of my prayer-book; and I feel when I

have dropped my half-crown into the plate I have done my part pretty well, and I think no more of religion until Sunday comes again."

Alice James looked at the speaker: was he in earnest? She said no more at that moment; but the next day she wrote him a little note, inviting him to a cottage meeting, chiefly for working-men.

It cost her something to send that note, but she was clearly convinced it was right to do it; her aunt, with whom she was staying, urging her to act as she was led to, on the principle of "Duties never clash."

Mr. H. did not feel much at ease when the cottage was reached, and when a crowded little gathering of men and women gave warm welcome to Miss James and the "good gentleman" who had come with her. The service began with a simple hymn—

"We're travelling home to heaven above,
Will *you* go?
To sing the Saviour's dying love,
Will *you* go?"

The hearty singing completely silenced him. How poor and feeble his best notes were, compared with the tones of those rough men. Yes, certainly, they *felt* all they sang. It was reality within. Then the prayer. Miss James' words were so simple, and yet how reverent! She was asking that all in that room might realise what they were in God's sight. The friends and neighbours might think well of them, but were their *hearts* right? Was sin there—sin hidden away unrepented of; or was it with every one a heart cleansed from sin—a heart in which the Holy Spirit of God dwelt? The prayer concluded with these words—

"Teach us, O teach us to know *ourselves* to be sinners!

Teach us, O teach us to know the Lord Jesus Christ to be *our Saviour*!
We ask it in His name. Amen."

Mr. H. felt extremely uncomfortable. True, he knew he was a

better-dressed man than any in the room; but he felt (as he afterwards described it) all rags and tatters within. Surely Miss James had been praying for *him*! Surely all in the room read him through and through. Had he not pretended to be religious—a prayer-book Christian at least—by his Sunday life of church-going? Did he not hold out vain hopes to the inexperienced about certain shares, and gather his riches in a way which would not bear the light? It made him very uncomfortable to think about it all.

By this time Miss James was giving her address. The text was from Isaiah xliii.: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine!"

It was a very loving message—full of the deep tenderness of the Gospel of Hope; but Mr. H. hated himself the more! If the God of Love loved *him* and sought *him* the sinner, giving, in His love, His Son to die,—to make the coming back possible,—if He were even now *waiting to be gracious*, "ready to forgive," "plenteous in mercy"—oh, but it condemned him! How pitifully worthless the false peace, false security, false position with which he had hitherto been so satisfied.

In the pause which followed the address, he rose, and, turning to the people assembled, said with some emotion, "My good friends here, despise me if you will, but *pity* me. I am what the world calls a rich man; but oh, how poor, how miserably poor, God only knows! Please pray for me—I feel utterly helpless, utterly lost!"

"Then, brother, there's hope," said an old sailor, starting up from his seat at the back of the room; "for the Lord Himself came down from heaven to seek and save the lost. Depend upon it, your name is written somewhere amongst the

helpless ones, that He's come along all that distance to give a lift up to!"

That night Mr. H. confessed that, although over sixty years of age, he had never had a Bible of his own in his life. The following day Miss James asked his acceptance of one.

It was a glorious summer's evening, some fifteen months after Mr. H. came into possession of his first Bible, that Miss James stood up to speak to a large crowd gathered in a drill-hall not twenty miles from London. Her platform was a waggonette. They were in the middle of the first hymn—

"All hail the power of Jesu's name," when there was a little movement in the crowd, many of whom were obliged to stand. Someone was pressing towards the waggonette, and Miss James recognised in him her elderly friend.

"Forgive me," he whispered, almost breathless with the exertion he had made to press his way through that dense audience; "but I want so much to take my stand beside you here. I was so well known in the past amongst many who are, I know, here to-night,—as a racing man and gambler,—that I long to let them *feel* I am a different man to-day!"

Miss James felt her friend was too much in earnest to be denied. She motioned him to take a seat on her right hand, and was soon conscious that it was as he had said. Many recognised him, and were much

moved to notice him in that prominent position. The service proceeded, and, amid a breathless silence, Miss James spoke upon the text: "The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

At the close of her address Mr. H. rose, and said—

"True, true, I know it; I have proved it,"—words which fell from his lips again and, again,—words which met with a response from the crowd, "Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!"

The address came home with unusual power, owing, doubtless, to the presence of one by the speaker's side whose very position there that night was a living sermon, proclaiming without speech or utterance the long-suffering and tender mercies of a loving and gracious Father.

Mr. H., who was very silent as he left the drill-hall with Miss James and her friends, said in parting, a few moments later, "I heard some one speak of me just now as 'poor H.' Ah, how little they understand my feelings to-night! Once in the days when I had no possession of value but the world's riches, I was indeed poor; but to-day, though I were penniless, yet, knowing Christ as my Saviour and Friend, I am rich indeed! God help me to convince my worldly friends wherein *true riches* lie, as I feel myself persuaded of the terrible and hopeless poverty from which, through faith in Christ, I have so mercifully been delivered."

*Abridged from "Living Sermons," by
MRS. G. S. REANEY.*

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MONTHLY VISITOR.

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“LIFE! LIFE! ETERNAL LIFE!”



SUCH was the piercing cry of Christian, when fleeing from the City of Destruction, and when his wife and children were calling after him to return. As if to drown their voices, he put his fingers in his ears, and still ran on, crying, “Life! Life! Eternal Life!”

So all have need to run, “that they may lay hold on eternal life”—

“on the life which is life indeed” (1 Tim. vi. 19, R.V.).

There is a life that is pre-eminently “the life indeed.”

Over all life there hangs an air of mystery. Yet what an interest attaches to it, even in its lowest forms! What an interest there is in plant-life, “from the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, even unto the cedar

tree that is in Lebanon" (1 Kings iv. 33).

And how that interest grows as we ascend the scale, and study the different forms of animate life, from the ant to the elephant!

But the chief interest centres in *human* life. And what a variety there is here! There is physical, rational, *moral*, and social life. But none of these forms constitute the truest, highest, and noblest life—"the life indeed." That life towers infinitely above them all. It is a life spiritual, immortal, eternal, divine!

And yet it may be laid hold of and lived even down here. If we would lay hold on it, we must by faith lay hold on Him who is the Author and Giver of it—the Lord Jesus Christ—"the King eternal, immortal, and invisible" (1 Tim. i. 17).

In order to this, there must be a personal dealing between the sinner and the Saviour. Sin must be honestly confessed and laid on the Sin-bearer, and a free forgiveness asked and received, through His precious and peace-speaking blood. Jesus Christ must be welcomed, and embraced, and enthroned in the heart. Christ indwelling in the heart, by His Spirit, is the only source of the life immortal and eternal.

The manifoldness of this life reveals its nature, its working, and its infinite worth.

Life in Christ.

"He that hath the Son hath THE LIFE: he that hath not the Son hath not THE LIFE" (1 John v. 12, R.V.).

We are "dead in trespasses and sins," till, quickened by the Spirit, we are brought into vital union with Christ. A dead branch may be bandaged to a living tree, but will not thereby partake of its life. Yet when the young scion is grafted on the tree, the moment the graft strikes,

it begins to participate in the life, the root, and fatness of the tree.

So we may be tied to Christ by rites and symbols and sacraments, and yet remain dead as before; but when, by the dear uniting bond of faith, we are grafted into Christ, and made one with Him, then the life that is in Him begins to flow into us, and we thus live in Him, and can say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20).

The point of contact with Christ may at first be small. The trembling soul may touch only the outer hem of His garment, saying within himself, "If I may but touch His garment," or "It may be the Lord will be gracious," but that simple touch has drawn virtue out of Christ, and the feeble pulse begins to beat with a new-born life and bounding hope. "This is a great mystery." Yet it is a great reality. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). This hidden life is as deep as it is divine. It is the well-spring of immortality. Christ in us, and we in Him, is our soul's only true life. It is "the life indeed."

"Dwell evermore in me,
And let me see
That nothing can untwine
Thy life from mine."

This life, once imparted, may be imperilled, but can never be lost. It may be overborne for a time, like the fresh upspringing fountain that lies within tide-mark, and which may be overrun by the briny wave, but, on its recession, wells up as clear and sparkling as ever. So the life which Christ gives to the believer "shall be in him a well (a fountain) of water, springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14).

Life on Christ.

The life begun in union can be maintained and perpetuated only by communion with Christ. Living in

Him, we must live *on* Him, in order to live *by* Him. "He that eateth Me," said Christ, "even he shall live *by* Me" (John vi. 57).

Faith and fellowship are the best feeders of the soul's life. As Paul said of the new life in his soul, "and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). And this faith finds its natural and proper exercise in fellowship with Christ.

Reader, seek to know the secret of such fellowship. There lies the hiding of your power. Prayer has a wonderful power in helping to bear life's burdens, and to fight life's battles.

"We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!"

The more habitual our faith, and the closer our fellowship, the fuller the flow of the life that is in Christ into our souls. But alas! our souls are like narrow-necked bottles, so that too often more runs over than runs in. We have need of a larger faith to expand our souls, and to draw down and draw in a richer supply. "Lord, increase our faith." According to our faith will it be unto us. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."

Jesus Christ came not only "that we might have life, but have life more abundantly" (John x. 10). He desires to "fill us with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). He even desires that "His joy might remain in us, and that our joy might be full" (John xv. 11).

He will not stint us if we do not stint ourselves. Our leanness may be the result of our laziness. We must live out the principles we profess. Our faith must be practical and painstaking. We must "exercise ourselves unto godliness." Such exercise is profitable. "Do not My words," says God, "do good to him that walketh uprightly?" (Mic. ii. 7).

If only by faith we live on Christ, His grace will abound unto our fruitfulness. We shall "grow in grace," and reach towards a higher and nobler manhood.

Reader, is this your ambition? To be without it is not safe.

Life for Christ.

The life we get *in* and *by* Christ we are to expend *for* Him, and in His service. Our life should be our response to His love.

The love of Christ should constrain us to live no more to ourselves, but to Him who died for us. There ought to be a clear line drawn between the old life and the new—living for self and living for Christ.

Naturally, self is the cherished idol of the heart. Self-pleasing is the end and object of life. And a sorry life it is. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (Matt. xvi. 25). But if we are to live the Christ-life, self must be dethroned, and Christ set up as the Emperor of heart and life. In His name and strength we must daily go forth to fight against self and sin—against all the evil within us and around us.

"All for Christ," should be our life-motto. Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we are to hold ourselves as His peculiar property. We are to be willing to be bound to His sweet yoke, and to serve Him with a loyal and loving heart. We are to make an unconditional surrender of ourselves to Him. Head, heart, hands, we are to lay at His blessed feet. We are to obey His voice, to take up our cross and follow Him. Whether He call us to active service or to patient suffering, we are to follow. We are to work or wait, to run or rest, at His pleasure. We are to seek to "magnify Him, whether by life or by death." We are to learn the object-lesson of the bullock standing between a plough and an altar, ready either for service or sacrifice.

We are to lay out ourselves, all that we are, and all that we have, at the Master's disposal, and so as to meet His approval. In short, we are to live a *consecrated* life. We are to live ever, only, all, for Christ.

Living thus for Him, we are to be His witnesses in the world. We are to be His epistles, known and read of all about us. We are to recommend Him to others. We are to espouse, uphold, and extend His cause. We are to strive to spread His name and fame far and near.

Blessed life! if only we seek thus to spend and be spent for Him. This were "life indeed." But alas! how far short we come! Yet if we have a real desire to live for Christ, that desire will and must assert itself. And He who has implanted the desire will fulfil it.

Reader, have you that desire? Bless God for it, and pray to Him to strengthen it the more, and strive to live more nearly as you pray.

Life with Christ.

Of the threefold life, *in Christ, on Christ, and for Christ*, we have a memorable epitome in Paul's words: "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. xx. 21). What a grand life! This is surely to "live indeed," and in the highest sense. Could anything be higher or better?

Well, Paul himself tells us of something better still. What could that be? On the back of the confession, "To me to live is Christ," he adds, "and to die is gain." And then that "to depart and to be *with* Christ is far better."

Life WITH Christ—that is the climax and crown. That ~~is~~, above all, "the life indeed." There is no doubt a deep sense in which we may live *with* Christ down here, but "to depart and be *with* Him," and live *with* Him in glory, will infinitely surpass all that has gone before.

Yet the life here is the preparation, the pledge, the prelude to the life yonder. In living the Christ-life here, in cultivating all the Christian graces, we are shaping our eternal crown, and polishing the gems, like the topaz and emerald and diamond, that are to stud it for ever.

The life yonder will be the consummation and the reward (doubtless a reward of grace) of the life here. And oh, what a reward! To dwell for evermore in Christ's presence, to see His face and reflect His glory, to walk in the cloudless sunshine of His love, and to be filled with all the fulness of His joy. This surely is the life immortal and eternal!

Reader, will you not make for the life everlasting? Will you not run for it? What would it be to miss it, and to become the prey of the second death, the death everlasting, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched"! (Mark ix. 44).

Christ's commission, and the Father's commandment, were—LIFE EVERLASTING. And sublime as the issue will be, how simple the beginning! "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). "Be not afraid, only believe." Be afraid only not to believe.

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WILLIAM GRIMSHAW OF HAWORTH.



In the days of Whitefield and the Wesleys, another labourer was doing a great work for God among the people in the moors of West Yorkshire. William Grimshaw was inducted into the living of Haworth in the year 1742, and for twenty-one years in that place, and for miles around, preached the word of life

“in season and out of season.” For some years previously he had been curate of Todmorden, a village not many miles distant from Haworth, and it was there that the great change occurred which transformed the formal pastor into the zealous servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some solemn events had made him

feel uneasy about his state in the sight of God, and he set about trying to reform his life and find salvation by his own good works. Ignorant himself of the way of justification, he was powerless to help those who came to him for counsel. Visiting one day in the house of a friend, two bright flashes of light from some pewter dishes, ranged against the wall, attracted his attention to a book, which he opened. The book was Owen on Justification. He took it home, and, after much prayerful and earnest study of its contents, he was enabled by the Spirit of God to give up all hope of justification through his own works, and to "embrace Christ only for his all in all."

"Oh, what light and comfort," he says, "did I now enjoy in my own soul, and what a taste of the pardoning love of God!" The Bible became, to him such an entirely new book, that he told a friend, in speaking of it, that "had God drawn up his Bible to heaven and sent him down another, it could not have been newer to him."

Shortly after his settlement at Haworth, he went through a remarkable experience, to which he seldom referred, but which had a great influence upon his spiritual life in time following. One Lord's Day, while engaged in reading the first part of the service in church, he was suddenly prostrated, and, during a time of bodily insensibility, he had what he describes as "a glorious vision from the third heaven." He saw the Lord Jesus appearing to him, and showing him His wounded hands and feet. Immediately his soul was filled with the joyful sense of assured acceptance in Christ, his bodily powers returned, and he was able to conduct the service in the afternoon. From that day onward he was able to say, "I know whom I have believed," and burning love to the Saviour characterised his life and ministry.

At Haworth he found himself among people "as ignorant as the country was wild." Drunkenness and lawlessness prevailed. The Lord's Day was dishonoured, and the house of God deserted. Grimshaw began to preach in simple, homely words, for eloquence or fine language would have been thrown away upon men who needed to be convinced "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Like his Master, he wept over the lost multitudes, and yearned for their salvation. He might have said, like Whitefield, "You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves?" To an unusual extent he realised the priceless value of an immortal soul, and the awful doom of the unforgiven sinner. Once when Whitefield spoke to the people of Haworth in a flattering way of their life and conduct under the ministry of such a faithful pastor, Grimshaw interrupted him, and cried out, "Oh, sir, for God's sake do not speak so! I pray you do not flatter them. I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open."

His intense earnestness often led him to try quaint methods in dealing with the careless. It is said that he has been known to go out into the street while the service was going on, and chase into church the people he found loitering outside. Passing through the village one Lord's Day, a gentleman noticed a number of people making their escape from the public-house, some out of the lower windows, others by climbing over a wall. On asking an explanation of their sudden flight, he was told that the parson was coming!

One day he went to the cottage of an old blind woman whom he had frequently visited, but who was still, he feared, unawakened. He began to poke her repeatedly with his stick, and, not knowing who it

was, she grew angry, and uttered an oath. So her pastor was able to bring home to her the lesson he wanted to teach her, that her heart was still unchanged.

After a sermon he had preached, he prayed in this homely way: "Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing, take all these poor people under Thy care, and bring them in safety to their own homes, and give them their suppers when they get home. But let them not eat a morsel till they have said a grace; then, let them eat and be satisfied, and return thanks to Thee when they have done. Let them kneel down and say their prayers before they go to bed. Let them do this for once at any rate, and then Thou wilt preserve them till the morning."

For miles across the moors this good servant of Christ went, in storm or sunshine, carrying everywhere the glad tidings of salvation. When urged to spare himself, he would answer, "Let me labour now. I shall have rest enough by and by. I cannot do enough for Christ, who has done so much for me."

Frequently he would utter exclamations expressive of his love to the Saviour: "My God, my Jesus, my Master, I love Thee indeed, but how shall I love Thee enough?" His prayerfulness was very great, and he lived day by day in communion with God. It was said of him that he was "like a man with his feet on earth, and his soul in heaven."

Of the little he possessed he gave freely away, often spending his whole stipend, and having to stint himself in consequence. "If I should die to-day," he was heard to say, "I have not a penny to leave behind me." "I want no more of you," were his words to his people, "than your souls for my God, and a bare maintenance for myself." It is said that often he had only one coat and one pair of shoes. He would find a

bed for himself in his hayloft, to make room for guests in his house, and would even take upon himself the task of cleaning their shoes, willing for Christ's sake to be lowest of all and servant of all. When travelling about on his Master's errands, his fare was often a crust of bread and a cup of water from the stream. Sometimes the scanty meal was eaten on horseback, that he might not lose time.

Whatever were his hardships, his work was joyful, and he went about it singing. His bodily frame was robust, and only once in the course of sixteen years was he ever kept from his duties by sickness. At the dead of night, in the midst of a snow-fall, he would rise from bed to go to a sick-bed. When sent for to visit in sickness people who had refused to listen to him in health, he would say, "Now the hand of God is upon you, and you think the devil is ready to take you, and hell open to receive you, now it is 'Send for Grimshaw.'"

His labour was not in vain. Though some mocked and scorned his faithful message, many believed and turned to the Lord. When he first came to Haworth, there were only twelve communicants in his church. Towards the close of his ministry there were four hundred communicants in winter, and sometimes twelve hundred in summer.

Whitefield and Wesley both visited Haworth, and preached to great audiences. On one occasion when Wesley came to preach, the crowds were greater than the church could hold, and the churchyard was filled with eager listeners. There was still opposition to the truth in many places. When Wesley was preaching along with Grimshaw in another village, a drunken rabble, armed with clubs and stones, interrupted Wesley, throwing Grimshaw down, and covering both of them with mud. The people who had

come to hear were treated with great cruelty by the mob. But elsewhere it was different. The truth was listened to with earnestness, the people "drinking in the word of God as a thirsty land the refreshing showers."

Whitefield preached on one day at Haworth to six thousand hearers in the churchyard, and to a thousand communicants in the church. He describes the occasion as being "most awful" in its solemnity. Another time he preached from the words, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). The solemn silence which followed the announcement of the text was broken by a wild shriek of terror, and Grimshaw, hastening toward the preacher, was heard to say, "Brother Whitefield, you stand among the dead and the dying; an immortal soul has been called into eternity. The destroying angel is passing over the congregation. Cry aloud and spare not." It was then made known that one of that great assembly had been summoned into the presence of God. Again the text was announced, and again a loud cry was heard from another spot. Another soul had been called away! With awful solemnity his hearers listened as Whitefield entreated them with impassioned earnestness to flee from the wrath to come.

While blessed and being made a blessing to others around, Grimshaw was not without trials in his own home. He had a son, a careless and dissipated young man, who went on in his reckless course, heedless of his godly father's prayers and entreaties.

He used to say to the horse he rode, which had formerly been his father's, "Once thou didst carry a saint, but now thou carriest a devil." After the death of his father, he was led to repentance, and became a new man in Christ Jesus. He did not long survive his father, and shortly before he died he was heard to say, "What will my father say when he sees I have got to heaven?"

In the year 1763 a malignant fever broke out in Haworth. Grimshaw had a presentiment that someone in the family would fall a victim to it, and exhorted all to be ready. Though feeble in body, he still continued his work and visited his sick parishioners. "I expect my stay upon earth to be short," he said, "and I must endeavour to make the most of a short life, and so devote myself to God as not to go fearfully creeping toward heaven at last." The fever seized him, and, though no danger was apprehended by others, he believed it was the summons to leave his work and enter into rest. During his illness he gave utterance to rapturous expressions of confidence and joy in the Lord. "I have nothing to do but to step out of my bed into heaven." "I shall soon be at home for ever with the Lord—a poor miserable sinner redeemed by His blood."

Reader! are you seeking the salvation of others? Are you in earnest about your own salvation? "You may go to hell asleep, but you cannot go to heaven asleep." "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

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THE MUMMY WHEAT.



THERE are many persons in the community who profess to believe in the truth of the Bible statements, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He came into the world and became man, suffered and died in the place of the guilty, rose from the dead, and is the only Saviour of sinners; and who, notwithstanding, know nothing of the peace and hope which sweeten and brighten the life of the true believer in Christ. Many of these persons are much troubled in their mind in regard to this, and earnestly desire to know why it is so. The simple explanation is that, whatever may be their belief, they have not attained, as individuals, unto saving faith in Christ. The belief they possess rests on the assent of the mind, or the conviction of the under-

standing. That which they want is the reception of the truths referred to, in their heart. The words of the Apostle Paul are very distinct on this point. He says, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 8-10).

A lady came one evening by appointment to have some conversation with me. She said, "I am a restless wanderer, seeking rest, and finding none. I have read your books, and have heard you preach; and both your writings and preaching convince me that there is something to be had, which I have not yet received. I heard you yesterday," she continued, "and I think I can say that I understood every word, and also agreed with all your statements; but still I am sure there is something wanting."

I replied, "Have you asked the Lord to show you what it is?"

"Yes," she said; "I have prayed; and God knows how earnestly I desire to know Him, and His salvation!"

I asked, "Are you conscious of unwillingness to believe any statement in the Word of God?"

"No, indeed, I am not; I assent to every word I read; but I do not feel, as some people say they do, that I am reading about myself. They say they can see themselves as in a glass—is that so?"

"Yes," I answered, "that is as it should be."

"Then," she added, "that is where I fail. I believe the Word of God, and hold it firmly against all disputers, still I certainly do not feel what you say."

I said, "I think I can see two reasons why you have no rest. One is, that you are trying to hold the Word; and the other, that you are trying to feel what you do not yet possess."

"Now," she said, "you perplex me more than ever."

I replied, "You may hold the Word ever so firmly, but that is not yielding yourself to it, that it may hold you. The *dévil* holds the Word, and knows its truth too; and if you could know it as well as he does, your knowledge would not save you."

I continued, "One day I went in company with some friends to see a mummy unwrapped. I cannot tell the number of yards there must have been in the wrapping, but it was a great length. Every now and then, as the endless bandage was unrolled, there dropped out vegetable seeds and grains of wheat. We were told that, from hieroglyphics on this mummy, the corpse must have been wrapped up at least two thousand eight hundred years, yet there was that poor body and its cerements undecayed. And there too were the seeds which had been undisturbed so long.

"The fact of their being held there did not make them fruitful; but when they were put into the ground and watered, it was not many days before green stems were to be seen coming up. I have not a doubt but that, in due time, there was corn in the ear, and then full corn too.

"Now, see the difference between the seed being held and kept ever so carefully, and its being allowed to take hold of the ground. When it took hold of the ground with its tender root, immediately it began to grow."

"What is that to teach?" asked the lady.

I said, "It teaches that you should

not only make efforts to hold and understand the Word, but that you should specially receive it as a little child, and let the Word take hold of you: you will then see and know the difference.

"For example, take a truth of Scripture: 'Christ came into the world to save sinners.' Instead of merely assenting to this, as an historical fact, suppose you apply it to yourself, thus: 'Christ came into this world, and is here now, to save me, a sinner. If it is so, Lord, save me, just as I am.'"

"I think I can understand what you mean," she said.

"There you are," I replied, "trying to understand again, instead of resting upon the Word.

"Take another truth of Scripture: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' It would be ignorance and folly to say this is not true; but even if you profess to believe this truth, your acknowledgment would only condemn you. You should rather let it lay hold of you thus: God so loved me, and yet I never loved Him, and never received Him! This would be a seed taking hold of the ground; it would spring up and bring a result. The result would be, Lord, I thank Thee for Thy love to me, and for Thine unspeakable gift. Another result would be, that God would give you everlasting life, and assure you by His Word that you will never perish.

"Understand, everything depends upon your believing; that is, your so receiving the Word, that you may be changed by it."

"Thank you," said the lady; "I do believe. I will believe in the way you describe. I see now where I was wrong, and why I could not feel."

"So far," I added, "I thank God for

you; but the Word of God, whether written or preached, is like the cross which held up Christ, or like the pole upon which the brazen serpent was lifted up. The people were told to look, not at the pole, but the serpent—not at the cross, but the Christ upon it—not at the Word, but the Saviour revealed in the Word. 'Look unto Me,' said the Lord, 'and be ye saved, all ye ends of the world.'

'There is life for a look at the Crucified One;

There is life at this moment for thee!'"

"Yes," she said; "but how am I to know that all this is for me?"

"Very easily," I replied. "The very fact that you are a sinner is warrant enough for you;—add to this the fact that you are longing for salvation. Your desire is a proof that the Spirit of God has been striving with you in particular. Now, just think, what would you do if you saw a vision of Christ upon the cross, and heard Him say, 'I suffered this for you'?"

She replied, "I do not know what I should do,—I should be frightened."

"But what if you were encouraged? Would you not thank Him for His love in taking that place, and suffering for you?"

"Yes, I should," she answered firmly.

"That is what we call believing," I said. "How can I believe good news, and not be glad? and how can you really believe in such love, and not thank God? Thus, you see, while people merely hold the Word, they talk, argue, and wait to feel; but when it takes hold of them, they thank God, and rejoice."

"Yes," she exclaimed, half laughing for joy; "I do thank the Lord, and thank you for making it all so plain."

I could not help thanking God

too at the simplicity with which this long-perplexed lady at last received the truth; and the truth took hold of her, bringing her to the living personal Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I see," she said, in her surprise, "it is not a new mistake; the Jews made it in our Lord's time. He told them plainly, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life' (John v. 39, 40). Who else can give life but Christ?"

"It is one thing to read and hear about Christ, and another thing to have a definite transaction with Him. Only in this way—that is, by speaking to Him, and being taught by the Spirit—can we get to know Him Himself."

I told her of a gentleman who was reading a newspaper in a train. Presently he stopped, and, taking out his pencil, he marked the margin of the paper opposite a particular paragraph. Then he said to a friend who was sitting next to him, "I will see about this as soon as I get to town." His friend read the paragraph, and said, "That is a very likely thing."

"Oh," I said, "if people would only read their Bibles in the same way, and when they come to a passage or verse which concerns their case, would mark it, and go at once to the Lord, and inquire about the blessing which is to be bestowed. The Bible does not give us the blessing, but tells us of Him who does, and we should go to Him direct."

"Oh yes! I see it all more and more plainly. Salvation does not consist in knowing about it, but in having it. Oh, I do rejoice in God my Saviour!"

"I find," she added, "another mistake which people make. They think they must guide themselves by the Word of God, while we have not to guide ourselves at all. The living Christ is our Guide, for does He not say, 'Follow Me'?"

"Yes," I said; "the hymn says,—

'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land!
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand!'

So you see, we have not only guidance, but holding also.

"Take a familiar illustration, the Bradshaw Railway Guide. That book tells you of a place, and the way to it, but it does not take you there; it is the train that carries you to your destination.

"So, you understand, the Bible tells you about heaven, but it does not take you there; it is Christ who saves you, and brings you to heaven."

"Oh, that is beautiful!" and my young friend went away rejoicing. She had found a key which had opened a door of liberty and gladness to her soul.

She could see that God had raised His Son from the dead to encourage and guide her in His own Person. The Word is written in order to reveal Christ, and to bring us to trust in Him as a living Saviour.

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SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT SOCIETY.
SECRETARY—R. HENDERSON SMITH, 40 N. HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

AUGUST 1896.

SAVING GRACE.



See page 4.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD used often to say, "I am grace's man." He was simply repeating, in his own words, the confession of the apostle, "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

Grace is the very essence of the gospel. The word for it is found one hundred and fifty five times in the New Testament; and kindred words on the sacred page

are like the stars in an Eastern sky for number and brightness. Grace helps us wonderfully to understand God's way of salvation. A child may easily learn what grace means, and if he does so, he will know the sum of saving knowledge.

The word itself helps us greatly. The word Paul uses for grace is as radiant as sunshine. It is almost

the very same as the word for joy. Indeed, the word is translated "joy" in the Epistle to Philemon, ver. 7; and twice "pleasure," in Acts xxiv. 27 and xxv. 9. Grace, then, is that which, in all its parts and outgoings, begets joy.

The great "parables of grace" in the fifteenth chapter of Luke amply justify and illustrate this explanation. The returning prodigal had many sorrows, which were his own sins in their rebound. But grace made him glad. Everything about it brought him joy at once, and only joy: the welcome, the kiss, the shoes, the calf, etc., etc. And it made all in the house glad, except the sullen, solitary, elder brother, who knew nothing of grace. But the grand lesson of these parables is this: "There is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God," not only among the angels. That joy must be in the heart of God Himself. With Him also it is more blessed to give than to receive. As sin is wholly sorrow, so grace is wholly gladness. It radiates gladness all round, to the giver as well as to the receiver. The father pardoned, as if he cared only for giving and forgiving. He thus seemed to the elder brother the greater prodigal of the two. Superabounding grace threw abounding sin into the shade.

Grace in God is that movement of God towards man, which gives joy, and only joy to God, and only joy to man.

The religion of grace, rightly understood, can therefore never be a sad or gloomy thing: the want of it, or the abuse of it, easily may. The Bible handles many sad and gloomy things; but grace created none of them, and its aim is to destroy or transform them all. It has a virtue to turn even sorrow into sacred joy. Only a little child or a delirious patient blames his physician for the sores he comes to cure. A

gloomy religion of grace is a contradiction possible only to those who confound the disease and the remedy.

The mere word grace, well understood, might entirely change many a man's religion. "Rabbi" Duncan one day, in deep religious despondency, was repeating to himself some Greek texts, one of which had the word for grace. "Grace," he said; "that means joy: the exercise of grace gives joy to God. Why should I deny God that joy?" In a moment his soul was in the full sunshine of God.

He who has a clear idea of grace will hardly make a mistake regarding any of the saving truths. It is a Christian idea; it is found in no heathen religion, in no pre-Christian writer. The Bible idea of grace embraces grace in its fountain, in its channel, and in its receiver: grace in God, grace in Christ, and grace in man. That is the whole of Christianity.

Grace in its Fountain—God.

We miss much by not questioning ourselves closely upon our conception of grace. We easily confound grace, mercy, and love. There can be no grace without love, but there may be love without grace. Love unites those who are *like* each other; it finds equals or makes them. Grace has not play between equals. Love flows forth, on a level; grace flows down to the sunken. God's love, in presence of our sins, reaches out a rescuing hand to us in our deep degradation. That is grace. It is God's amazing love pouring itself out, with infinite delight, upon the unloving and unlovely, and finding its reward in the exercise. It is God's free favour to those who deserve nothing but punishment; the whole of God's glad, loving kindness to sinful and perishing man.

“Grace and mercy” always go together, and their united product is peace.

This master-idea, the very heart and soul of our holy religion, has as many facets as the flashing diamond.

Outgoing or life-giving power belongs to the Bible idea of grace. God, the giver of grace, is likened to the sun (Ps. xxxiv. 11). The sun must shine, and to shine is to give. Grace is a full spring that overflows, and bears barriers down.

Grace implies sin, and such sin as makes self-salvation for ever impossible. Grace is possible only among those who have sins to be forgiven, and wants to be supplied. To think little of sin, is to think little of the grace that pardons and conquers it.

Grace always gives freely. Unless it gives gratis, it is not grace. “A deserved grace” is an impossibility. Grace is not of merit, but merit is of grace. “Freely by His grace” might be written across every page of the New Testament. Even its rewards are rewards of grace. Man comes to the throne of grace as a beggar, and his empty hand meets God’s full hand.

Grace covers the whole of salvation and of the Christian life: “it is from grace to grace.” We speak of preventing grace, pardoning grace, restraining grace, dying grace, the grace of final acceptance. The whole of the Bible throbs with free grace. Grace cannot be at strife with justice, for ours is a religion of law and conscience. One text will be enough here: “Even so might grace reign through righteousness . . . by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. v. 22).

Grace in its Channel—Christ.

As God is the only fountain, so Christ is the only channel of grace. It is written as with a sunbeam in hundreds of texts, that we receive grace only through Christ. The notion that grace in us depends upon

our relation to some institution, or ceremony, or human priest or mediator, or personal achievement, is utterly opposed to the spirit and declarations of the New Testament: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “By grace are ye saved through faith.” Faith is the attitude of soul exactly answering to free grace: it is the soul going out of itself for that which it cannot find within itself; it is the self-renouncing, self-despairing, and clinging mood of the soul; it is the frame of mind in the man who expects salvation not by what he does for himself, but by what another has done for him. How gracious and alluring is the revelation of saving grace by Christ: in His incarnation, human life, atoning death, resurrection, and intercession in heaven! By using the same words in each case, the glory of this revelation is likened to the manifestation of Christ’s glory at His Second Coming (Tit. ii. 11), and to the outburst of the Eastern sun upon mariners who have spent the dark night in the jaws of death (Acts xxvii. 20).

The Bible has a vast array of phrases and images to set forth the fulness and freeness of saving grace. The sacred writers exult in this truth. We read of “the exceeding riches of His grace,” “the unsearchable riches,” grace “exceeding abundant,” grace that does “much more abound.” The exact image in these last phrases seems to be that of an ever-advancing tide, of which each wave outruns and buries the preceding: overflow surpassing outflow. The Apostle Paul writes as if he were greatly afraid of doing wrong to the abundance of grace by his poor words. Language here lies far beneath the conception, and the conception lies far beneath the reality.

Grace in its Receiver—Man.

All these riches are for giving

away, and for giving away to the sinful. They have been brought to your door by Christ, and are yours, reader, for the taking. If you are without them, the blame must be all your own. For this grace is enough for all, offered to all, free to all. The early preachers seem to have spread out before their hearers all the fulness that is in Christ, and then practically to have said, "Such is the grace we offer you in the name of God: perish then if you can, perish if you dare."

Many a man has been surprised into the kingdom when the true conception of grace first flashed into his mind; and that conception then became the greatest, the mightiest, and the most delightful of all his ideas.

A minister once told us that Dr. Chalmers, the great Scottish divine, under whom he studied, lived in his memory chiefly by one incident. One day he was walking behind the doctor, who seemed lost in reverie. A gentleman crossed the street and put his arm in the doctor's, who woke up, and said in deep heart-tones, "O man, I was just thinking what a glorious thing free grace is." Yes; nothing yields deeper delight than abundance placed at the disposal of the perishing.

How, precisely, does grace become an experience in the heart? Self-righteousness, in all its forms, keeps out grace; for grace appeals to need, and cannot therefore be received by the self-sufficing. "Do not come on horseback for the grace of God," says an old quaint writer. "God's riches need not a penny of our own," says

another. Many miss the good of grace by mixing it with merit, works, etc. To mix is to adulterate and destroy: it is like mixing two colours, by which we lose both. The gospel prescribes grace as doctors prescribe a medicine—by forbidding all other remedies. And grace is never received as a thing by itself, apart from Christ. We receive *it* in receiving *Him*.

Grace makes new men and women, for it brings into the heart the explosive power of a new affection. It begets gratitude, that is the disposition grace creates in every yielding, consenting soul. This gratitude is the sense of infinite favours received; and it has produced millions of the grandest lives our planet has witnessed. For "they which receive abundance of grace . . . shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 17).

"By the grace of God, I am what I am," is the confession of millions now living. Over all their good deeds they gladly write, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Grace is a great fact, and a present experience. Have you, reader, felt the power of this grace? Have you? Has it gained the mastery over your heart and life? If it has not, are you willing to live longer without it? Has the Saviour still to make over you His touching lament: "How often would I . . . and ye would not?" Why not receive now the grace that is freely offered you in the gospel? Is it not surging at the closed door of your heart? Why not draw up the sluice, and let it in?

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A CHRISTIAN ROB ROY:

SKETCH OF JOHN MACGREGOR.



Through Fire and Water.

JOHN MACGREGOR, when an infant, was saved from the burning of the troopship *Kent*, East Indiaman, in the Bay of Biscay. Fire broke out in midst of a fierce gale, six hundred and forty-one persons being on board, many of whom perished. With

great hazard, the little child, only five weeks old, was conveyed to his mother's arms in a small boat, and thence through a raging sea, to a brig which happened to draw near. His father, Major MacGregor, who remained on the ship to the last, speaks of the agony he felt at parting. "I stood outside on the chains

to lift them into the boat. When I had handed in my infant, and saw the boat lowering down into an ocean so tempestuous that no sailor on board thought it would live for a moment, I grew blind. But my confidence was in the Lord my God. Twice the cry was that the boat was swamped. At last it reached the brig. I poured out my praises to the Lord."

The Message Bottle.

The Major, when all hope seemed lost, had written a few words hurriedly on a scrap of paper, which he sealed in a bottle, and threw into the sea. About nineteen months afterwards, when he was in the island of Barbadoes, this same bottle was brought to him by a friend, who had picked it up while bathing, and he read once more the words he had scrawled in the momentary expectation of death: "Elizabeth, Joanna, and myself, commit our spirits into the hands of our blessed Redeemer. His grace enables us to be quite composed in the awful prospect of entering eternity." How strange God's way is in providence! "He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm."

Thirty years had passed, and John, the Major's son, and subject of this sketch, was engaged in open-air mission work on Lanark race-course, when an old sailor was heard in the crowd selling doggerel verses on the burning of the *Kent*, and stating that he had been present. MacGregor went up to him, and said that he too had been on board the ship. The sailor thought so young a man could not have been there, and he curtly exclaimed, "That you were not, unless you were the baby I helped into the boat!"

A Mother's Wish and Prayer.

His mother sought, and not in vain, to have his spirit imbued

with grace from above. She is spoken of as a woman of great ability, of splendid character, and of as brave a spirit as ever woman possessed. After another escape from shipwreck, and when her child had passed through an almost fatal illness, she says, "I feel him a constant source for prayer, and fondly hope he is indeed saved for the Lord's service—perhaps he may be a minister of Christ yet." Her heart's desire was fulfilled far beyond her expectation. He became, though not a minister, one of the best workers for Christ in his generation.

He was born at Gravesend on January 24, 1825. He came of an ancient line of fighting men, one of whom was the famous Rob Roy of Scottish history. He had the fearless spirit of that sturdy chief, only it was baptized into Christ, whom he served with a devotion, with a courage and hardihood and untiring determination, such as no clansman, in less noble warfare, ever surpassed.

From the first the spirit of adventure and of true godliness seemed to be remarkably united in him. Even as a child he felt as if God were always near, controlling everything. He mentions an instance of this when he was eight years old: "I had been fishing one morning for some time, and had caught nothing, when I suddenly thought, 'I will ask God to let me catch a fish.' I prayed to God, and soon after, I caught a fish. Then the thought flashed through my mind, 'If God can answer this prayer, will He not take away my sins, and give me a new heart, if I ask Him?'"

A Muscular Christian.

In boyhood he was noted for feats of daring, and excellence in all kinds of manly sports and exercises; he was an adept in boxing, skating,

swimming, rowing, riding, and such like. At twelve he sprang into a lifeboat, as it left the shore, and took part in the rescue of shipwrecked sailors near Belfast. He hardly knew what fear was. Often he was in great peril, and had marvellous escapes.

Yet in all his robust youth and manhood, the fear of God was ever with him; and his frank, honest, and fearless avowal of Christ was made all the more impressive by the spirit and manliness he showed in secular things.

At Cambridge University he was one of a party of five who met for prayer and Scripture study; this at a time when it was esteemed ridiculous so to do; but MacGregor had courage and wit enough to hold his own against the jeers of his fellow-students. He studied for the bar; but his life was chiefly spent in literary and philanthropic pursuits, with intervals in which he indulged his passion for foreign travel.

A Good Talker to Boys.

By his bright, bold, open-hearted, high-minded ways, many unlikely characters were led to respect the Christian faith, and drawn into Christian usefulness. He was a foremost promoter of ragged schools, when these were first started. The children and rough youths he could ever keep spellbound by his thrilling stories, and simple, forcible way of stating the Gospel.

The following specimen of his talk to them is fitted to convey blessing to all who read it: "Many of you have not a good father to shelter you, and teach you; many of you have not a loving mother to cherish you, and kiss your tears away; many of you have not brothers or sisters to play with you, and love you. But, dear lads, have you not heard of One who, better than any father on earth, loves you; One who

is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother? He is the Good Shepherd. He will carry you like lambs in His bosom, and will gently lead you to His bright and beautiful home!"

A Terror to Evil-Doers.

The good agencies which owed their origin or strength to MacGregor are more than can be mentioned. He was chief organiser of the Shoe-black Brigade; he started the Lawyers' Prayer Union; in the promotion of Sunday Schools, Reformatories, Refuges, and other such industrial, educational, and merciful agencies, he was incessantly engaged. He became well known to the lower and criminal classes in London. One day he met a youth whom he had once taught in ragged school. He looked steadily into the boy's face, and said, "I'm very glad to find you have left off going to church." The lad grew crimson and pale, and took to his heels. He had been convicted for stealing the purses of old ladies in church.

MacGregor was one of the foremost in the Volunteer movement, and captain in the London Scottish. Here his influence for good was great. In a company, where loose talk was going on, he said, "Gentlemen, we are met here to serve our Queen; let us not dishonour our King of kings." He then left; when an officer asked, "Who is he?" The reply was, "John MacGregor, one of the finest men that treads God's earth!" One who heard it, remarks, "I can tell you that no one dared after that to indulge in loose language in his presence. The cry went forth, 'Here's John MacGregor!' and all unseemly language immediately ceased."

Sowing beside all Waters.

He went frequently abroad, and visited almost every notable place on the globe. Usually he travelled

alone; and gained world-wide fame by his exploits in his canoe *Rob Roy*, and other small craft of the same name, in which he voyaged on seas, lakes, and rivers, throughout Europe, also in Egypt, on the Red Sea, on the Jordan, and elsewhere in Palestine. In his travelling, as in all else, there was a true consecration; and he always took with him tracts, religious books, and copies of the Scriptures, for distribution. Ascending the Alps, peeping over the crater of a burning mountain, braving hostile Arabs, shooting the rapids in his frail canoe, on drill as a Volunteer, lecturing and writing about his adventures, street-preaching, arguing with atheists, tract-distributing, teaching in Sunday school, or visiting some outcast sick child in the slums of London; in all, however varied the outward form might be, there was but the single eye of Christian aim and service.

When he was opposed in open-air mission work, a bishop once encouraged him by saying, "No one does good who does not now and then tread on the devil's tail!" Here are one or two words of his own testimony: "God never gave greater blessings to any man on earth than to allow him to labour for sinners. Work of the Christian kind is a great soother. This is God's medicine for the heart-pains He sends us." "Remember that simple faith is all that is necessary to salvation. You ask why, then, do not all accept it? Surely the Bible gives a plain answer: our corrupt hearts, the devil, and our sinful desires, all

conspire against believing this simple truth." "Remember that the real spiritual struggling is to be on the knees in the quiet of your room." "It is not faith which saves. It is Christ through faith." He speaks of a little girl, whose creed is the essence of the Gospel, and in these words: "Jesus died astead of me." "Did not the Highest," he said on one occasion, "come down from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost? Let us, with deep reverence, follow in His footsteps." Standing beside an infidel, and about to offer prayer in his behalf, he said, "I am going to talk to a personal Friend." That prayer was not in vain.

Joyous Living and Dying.

This brave man died July 16, 1891, aged 66. "I am an old man now," he said, among his last words. "We must do our work for the King. It is *most delightful* to work for God. God knows our position. He is going to do great things. It is delightful to tell of the love of Jesus. Just to go and tell a poor man or woman of the love of God; and to help them, and the boys too. Oh yes!—that's delicious!"

Reader, his whole career speaks like the trumpet-voice of Joshua of old: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Seek the Lord. He is slow to anger, ready to forgive. He will have mercy. He is mighty to save. A kind Master. His yoke easy. His burden light. His reward eternal. As MacGregor remarked, near his end: "When at last He shall call us, may we be ready!"

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OCTOBER 1896.

“WIFE, I AM A JEW!”



AMONG my hearers one Sabbath day was a working man, whose case I believe to be not uncommon. He was strongly built, well dressed, and in a position of trust in a great factory. He was sober, industrious, a good father, a kind husband, a regular worshipper in the house of God, and with a considerable sum to his credit at the Savings Bank. I knew his wife was thoroughly Christian, and thought he himself was all right. I looked upon him as one of the typical working men who are a strength to their country and a credit to their Church. I

regard this kind of man as one of the noblest monuments to our Christian civilisation.

I was considering the subject of the rejection of the Jews. It was not difficult to show three things—first, that the Jews were rejected by God because they rejected Christ; second, that they rejected Christ because He placed them alongside the idolatrous Gentiles, without any merit of their own; third, that they resented this because, being ignorant of God's righteousness, they were seeking to establish a righteousness of their own.

The sermon went quietly on, endeavouring to bring out the fact that the Jew sought to establish a righteousness of his own, and seeking to show that that was not only characteristic of the Jews, but was a deep-rooted desire in the human heart; that one of the subtle insinuations of the great enemy is that a sober, upright man does not need a Saviour, but can work out a righteousness of his own. The pleading with which the sermon closed was an appeal to respectable men who were seeking to work out life's problem, apart from and independent of Christ.

On the Monday morning I received a letter from the man's wife, written with his consent. It was a pathetic letter, beautiful with the beauty of a deep and intense earnestness. It told me how he had gone home from church, silent, depressed, and with a kind of agony in his face. He laid aside his hat, sent his children into another room, and, before touching his dinner, looked in his wife's face, and said in tones of deep earnestness, "*Wife, I am a Jew!*" He had thought himself all right in the sight of God, but confessed that he had been resting his hopes on his own righteousness; and that God, through the sermon, had showed to him that he was just like the Jews, who, in their own self-righteousness, cast off Christ,

and on that ground were cast out by God.

He was in the deepest distress. He did not send for me; indeed, he said he could not see me. He allowed his wife to send me a request for prayer on his behalf, which was presented at the weekly prayer-meeting. He then turned to his Bible, read, pondered, and prayed. He came to the text, "Christ who is made unto us righteousness;" the scales fell from his eyes, he saw the great open secret of the Christian life, he accepted and surrendered, and the great crisis of human life took place. He was a converted man.

Since that day there has been a light in his face, peace in his heart, and a witness in his life that all tell of the blessed reality of the change that had come to him. His Bible became a new book, family worship a new reality; and while, in the factory, he had always been respected, his presence came to produce that hush and restraint among his fellows that never fail to accompany the presence of a true man of God.

Reader, in view of this incident, may I ask you to answer to God one or two pointed and personal questions?

Have you righteousness; and if so, is the righteousness in which you stand your own or Christ's? To be righteous is to be right with God—to be satisfactory to divine law and the divine Lawgiver, and to have your relations to God so adjusted that He can treat you as if you had never sinned.

Now, are you quite sure that what the man said of himself is not true of you—I am a Jew, seeking to establish my own righteousness? It is only Christ's righteousness that can give you peace now. The most heroic resolution you can make to be sober, upright, kind, and honest, will never bring you peace with God. And nothing will pass you to God's right hand in the day of judgment but being clothed in

the righteousness of Christ. You may be perplexed as to how to obtain that righteousness. I can only say to you that it will come to you in one way : if you accept Christ, you receive His righteousness. He was made sin for you, though He knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The gifts of the Saviour are inseparable from the Giver. If you accept the Giver, you get all His gifts. If you refuse to accept the Giver, you get none of His gifts. Take Him as your all in all, and you become righteous before God now, and may live in the assurance of full acquittal in the day of judgment.

Are you prepared to accept Christ and His righteousness as a lost sinner? Christ will refuse you if you seek to accept Him simply as a supplement to some merit of your own. He came to save sinners, and the man that refuses to take the sinner's place He cannot, will not save or help. I implore you to pray that the Spirit may open your eyes to see that you must let go all respectability, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, and reputation *as a ground of merit before God*, and as a sinner must simply accept Christ, with all the benefits and blessings of His salvation.

If you have accepted Christ and His righteousness, are you living a holy life? The man that is right with God through Jesus Christ is a man who seriously, sensitively, and constantly obeys God's holy laws. When you come into a righteous relation with God by the acceptance of Christ, be very careful to test that relation by this obedience. When you are brought into union and fellowship with the heart and purposes of God, in that union and fellowship your life must bear the impress of the Spirit. Have done once and for all with the attitude of the Jew. Let your life be in everything the organ and the instrument of the blessed Spirit of God.

If you are living a life of holy obedience, are you seeking to win others for Christ? The man I have told you about soon found courage to speak to other men, and has been the means, through God's grace, of helping others with the truth that brought newness of life to himself. I cannot give you a better evidence of your own conversion, than the fact that He is using you for the conversion of others. In seeking this great end, I advise you not to dwell on your own experience. What your neighbour needs is not your experience, but the Word of God. It is the Word that the Spirit works through ; and if you use that Word faithfully and prayerfully, you are bearing the most splendid witness for God, and He will bless it to the turning of your neighbour to Himself.

In living and working for Christ, do you realise that the outflow of your life in holiness and service depends entirely on the daily inflow of Christ's grace and spirit? The overlooking of this robs the Christian both of his peace and of his power for service. You may be thoroughly converted, and entirely consecrated to the will and service of the Master, but if you lose touch with Him, and get out of line of constant and conscious fellowship with Him, the joy of your conversion will vanish, the experience of your consecration will pass away, and your power for service will be paralysed. The life of the true Christian is a life where he abides in Christ and Christ abides in him. The present moment is always the accepted time, not only to the sinner, but to the saint, and if the Christian is not very careful of daily trust, daily study of the Word, daily prayer, and daily communion with his Lord, he gets out of help, out of heart, and out of happiness. Remember that you cannot live to-day on the grace of yesterday, or to-morrow on the grace of to-day.

If you are living in unbroken fellowship with the Lord, are you quite sure that you are daily honouring the mission of the Holy Spirit? Christ has committed the spiritual interests of those redeemed by Him to the administration of the Holy Spirit. No Christian can be in possession of peace, purity, and power, who does not realise that the mission of the Comforter must have a supreme place in his life. There are many Christians who put stress on self-effort, on the imitation of Christ, on the strength of heroic resolution. But by these things they never succeed. Collapse is sure to come. Their only safety is to realise that they live in the dispensation of the Spirit, and that faith, dependence, and the constant welcoming Him to the heart, are invariable conditions of spiritual progress. On the other hand, you must carefully keep in mind that the Holy Spirit will work for you, in you, and through you, only in so far as you are in faith loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Christians seem to think that the Holy Spirit is a kind of influence in the air. He is not this, but a divine Person, speaking not of Himself, but of Christ, and working with His omnipotent power through those whose hearts and lives are wholly surrendered to, and possessed by the grace and will of God's Eternal Son, our Saviour.

In seeking to live for Christ and to be guided by the Holy Spirit, are you sure that you are showing your Christianity in your common life? Some time ago a young man came to tell me he had given his heart to the

Lord. It was joyful news to me, for he had been wild and wayward, and had resisted the gospel with a kind of grim defiance. Some days after the interview I met his master, a Christian man, who said to me, "Have you heard that So-and-so has been brought in?" I answered, "Yes, and am waiting with great interest for the outcome." His master said, "I am sure it is real, for it has made the greatest difference in his work and his influence on his fellow-workmen." This was a witness that greatly delighted me. Our Christianity must stand the test of the most careful scrutiny in daily common life. In our home, among our companions, in the business sphere of our life, we have our great mission field, and if we are not real there, and out and out for Christ, our spiritual life cannot be real anywhere. Many Christians seem to expend their Christianity in church services and in religious meetings, and though these are blessed ordinances of grace, they are meant by God to enable us to live a Christian and Christlike life in our daily and ordinary duties. The best thing we can do for the Master is to be a living epistle in the sphere in which in His providence He has placed us.

Dear reader, I have written this tract with a supreme desire to help you to a real life. The only real life is life in Christ, and that life is not merely a moral and exemplary life, but a living union with the living God, wholly dependent on His grace, and absolutely devoted to His will in every hour and duty of it.

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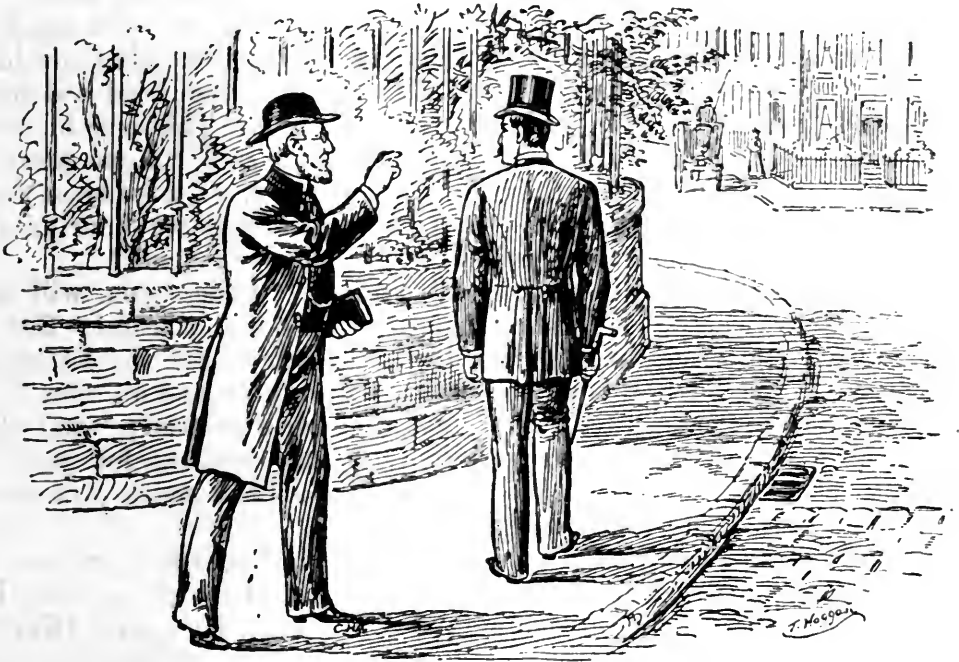
SCOTTISH "MONTHLY VISITOR" TRACT SOCIETY.

SECRETARY—R. HENDERSON SMITH, 40 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

NOVEMBER 1896.

A PROMISE AND AN OFFER.



HERE are two words, *promise* and *offer*. How often people try to grasp the former and hold it, instead of accepting the latter and being held by it. The idea of grasping promises, intending and hoping to have them fulfilled at some future time, has a charm for some people. It keeps them dreaming on about some in-

definite good which is to come some time.

Such a practice might have had some ground if promises were all that are held out to us in this dispensation. But it alters the case when we live in a time in which we need not say, as Abraham did, God will provide a Lamb for a sacrifice.

It is our privilege to say, God *has* provided a Lamb, and has accepted Him for us, and now makes a definite *offer* to us; not a promise, but an *offer* of salvation.

A bank-note is a promise to pay; but you may look at it, and even paste it into your Bible and read it daily, yet you and your starving family would go on starving, and ultimately perish, if you did not make better use of the note. It is sad to see people wasting or even losing present benefits under a false expectation that something may come to pass by and by.

A gentleman I am about to tell of came regularly to my church for a considerable time. I do not know what first induced him to do so, for he passed by three other churches to come to mine.

He afterwards told me that he attended my ministry because I preached as if I knew all about his difficulties. He said, "There are circumstances in my life that I never told anyone yet. You refer to them as if they were known to you."

It was easy to see that God was dealing with this soul, for of course I did not know what was passing in his mind. He came to church regularly, and I could not help observing him, for he generally came in late. Then suddenly he ceased to attend altogether.

One day, however, as I was passing through a certain square in London, I met this same man. I made bold to stop and speak to him. I said, "I have not seen you at church lately."

"No," he answered; "and you are not likely to see me there again."

"Indeed!" I replied, with surprise. "What is the matter?"

He answered, "Why, you say such strange things, I cannot stand it."

"What have I been saying?" I inquired.

"Oh, you split straws, and vex me so. For instance, you said that God does not promise to save sinners."

"True," I replied, "I did; but did I not also say, and almost in the same breath, that He *offers* to save? This is far better than promising to do so."

"What can be the difference?"

I said, "All the difference. If I promise to give you a book, and you go without it, that might be my fault for not fulfilling my promise; but if I offer you a book, and you have it not, it is because you did not accept it, and the fault is yours."

"That is nonsense!" he exclaimed. "I have no patience with such quibbles as that;" and walked off.

I tried to stop him; but he took no heed, and went away. I therefore proceeded on my way alone.

Two hours later we met again in the same square. Directly I saw him, I felt sure that the Lord had some message for him. This time he came up to me and said, "I am afraid I was rude to you. I have been waiting here for nearly an hour in the hope of seeing you again."

I replied, "I beg you will not mention that—it is all right. But," I added, "do you not see the difference between a promise and an offer?"

"I do," he answered; "and that is why I was looking for you. I should like a little more talk about this."

I said, "God does not promise to save us. He so loved us, that He gave His Son. He gave Him to take our place and punishment, that He might be free and able, as a just and holy God, to offer pardon and salvation to us sinners. He offers salvation therefore freely, for our acceptance. The question is, will you accept the offer?"

"I do not feel that I am worthy of such an offer. The more I think of it, the more I see how unworthy I am."

"But, dear friend," I said, "God does not make the offer to us because we are good or safe; but in His compassion, because we are very bad and lost; far from safe—altogether lost!"

"Yes, yes, I have heard you preach like that, but I never took that part to myself—it is too good, too wonderful."

"Too wonderful!" I repeated; "which is more wonderful, that Christ the Eternal Son of God should die a malefactor's death, or that, after He has done this, you, a sinner, should have an offer of pardon?"

Taking his arm, I said, "Now listen: God loves you, and has given His own Son to procure this salvation for you. This loving God who knows everything about you, and all your unworthiness, offers you, for His Son's sake, pardon and peace. The question is—will you have it?"

"Of course I will," he replied, "if I may; but"—

"Never mind the but," I answered; "when you accept such an offer, it must be with thanks. Let us together thank God for His love to us. How can you and I believe in such wondrous love, and not thank God?"

I suggested some words of acceptance and thanksgiving, when he said, "No, no, I cannot say all that. I ought to repent more and feel very differently to what I do at present. I won't be a hypocrite and deceive myself like that."

"Suppose," I said, "I am a person in much distress, and you take an interest in me and offer to help me, I think I should thank you for it, even before I knew what you could or would do. You would expect it from me, would you not?"

"Yes; but what about the change of heart and mind you are continually drilling into us? How can I thank God till I have that?"

"Why, dear friend, when you are thanking God for His offer of salvation, the change is begun by the work of the Holy Spirit. You have been brought beyond the asking into thanking. You were outside a door asking to come in, now you are crossing the threshold and coming inside. You are already in a different position: instead of knocking and expecting, you are actually putting yourself under and into the power of your Friend. When you thus submit yourself to Him, He begins immediately to work in you repentance and faith. As you go on thanking, He goes on changing your mind, which is repentance, and enabling you to trust Him, which is believing. I am trying to lead you—do as I advise—say, Glory be to God, Jesus died for me!"

"How can I say that?"

"My dear man, how can you say anything else under the circumstances? Look out of yourself at God's intention and offer to you. The least you can do is to thank Him."

He still hesitated.

"If Jesus died for you, you ought to thank Him for what He did."

"How can I know that?"

"Because you are a sinner."

"It seems to me," he replied, "that is just why I cannot."

"You look at it again: as a sinner you are the very person to do it. Say, Glory be to God, Jesus Christ died for me! What is that but acknowledging yourself a sinner, and thanking Him for His forgiving love toward you?"

"I think," he said, "I begin to see what you are driving at. You mean me to thank God for what He has done for me, notwithstanding my feelings."

"Certainly," I replied; "thank Him—thank Him as best you can till you can do it better."

After a pause he said, "Bless the

Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Ps. ciii. 1, 2).

"Thank God for that!" I interrupted; "go on praising Him. It will come all the better if you give up looking into yourself for feelings."

As we continued the third circuit of that memorable square, I put the question to my friend, "What made you think that God *promises* to save? tell me."

He answered, "Your preaching touched me, and I went home to look out some religious books; I am ashamed to say I have very few of such. However, I found Clark's *Scripture Promises*. I read these over and over, and committed some of them to memory, and ever since then I have been trying to believe them."

I said, "I was visiting at a house not long since, and in the bedroom in which I slept there was an illuminated text on the wall. The words written were, 'O that Thou wouldst bless me indeed!' and underneath this, as if intended for an answer, was the text, 'I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing.'"

"Well," said he, interrupting me, "what was wrong in that?"

I replied, "Dear friend, God does not answer prayer with a promise, but with an answer. Promises are made and intended to be the basis of prayer, and when prayer is definitely made, the answer is given."

"Jabez made this prayer, no doubt, upon God's covenant promise to

Abraham. He did not expect that promise of blessing in answer to his prayer; but the definite blessing itself, and that from God.

"Understand, a promise is the base, not the top, of the pyramid. When a promise of God is applied to your mind, take it and make a prayer upon it; more than that, expect an answer, and it will surely come. If God offers you salvation, thank Him for it, and accept it."

"I see what you mean," said my friend, "and thank you very much. I only wish that I had talked to you before. I have been anxious to do so for some time. Dear me! how many sleepless nights I have passed, since I first heard you!"

"Thank God for that too," I said; "it was a good preparation for to-day. It may be that God would not let you speak to me until you were ready. Or perhaps," I added, "He intended that I should have spoken to you before, and because I did not do so, He took you away from my church."

"Ah, but I am coming back again; I am not going to leave you; indeed, I intend to stick to you."

I said, "But what I should like you to do would be to cleave to the Lord instead of sticking to me, as you call it."

A great change passed over this man. He has long been not only a happy Christian, but one who has spent his time in profitable and useful occupation, and his life has been accordingly a happy one.

REV. WM. HASLAM, M.A.

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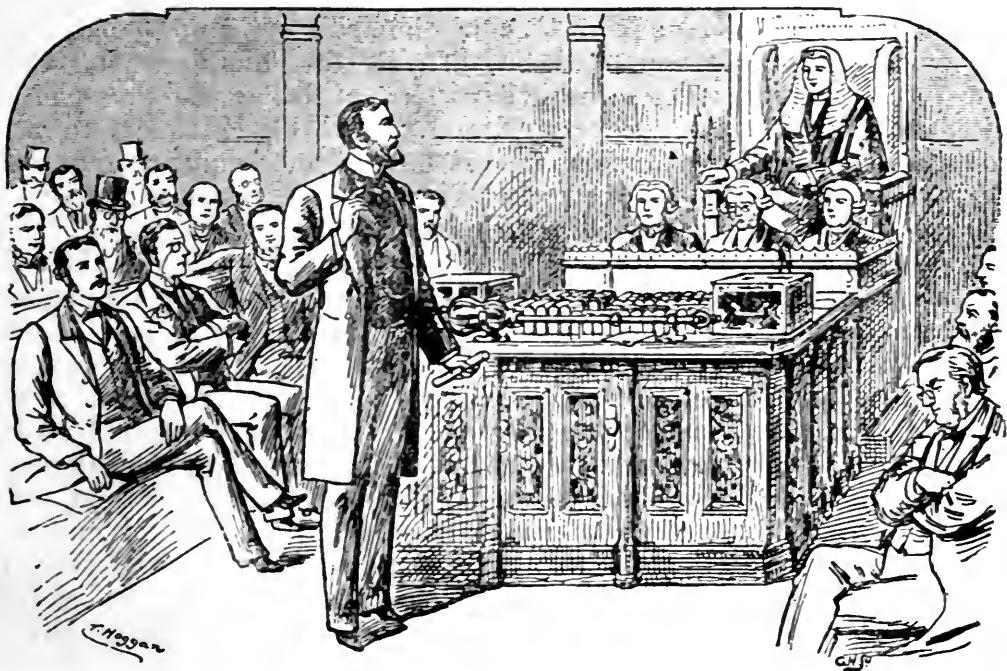
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MOVING THE ADJOURNMENT.



THOSE who take an interest in the proceedings of Parliament must have noticed how frequently a member will rise to propose the adjournment of the House. The result of such motion, if carried, is that the subject before Parliament is instantly changed. It may or may not come up again, but in the meantime the question is shelved. No matter how urgent it may be, no matter how vital to the well-being of the people, it is for the time being set aside.

We are familiar with these motions for adjournment in the political sphere, but we do not always realize that in the moral and spiritual realm multitudes do the very same thing.

May we venture to ask what is the question which God wishes us to settle, and regarding which men move the adjournment? Why, shortly, it is this: There was a time when God enjoyed man's fellowship and man walked with his Father in happiness and peace. But an enemy came and interrupted the communion. Sin was introduced, and man, ashamed and guilty, hid from his best Friend. The results of this were terrible, for the stream was poisoned at its source. Not only was there an estrangement brought about, guilt was also incurred; for the divine law, expressed as well as written on the human heart, had been broken. What God desires is a restoration—a putting away of the sin which wrought the damage, and peace re-established between Himself and fallen man. In order to do this, He gave up His only Son to die in our place, and thus baffle the evil intentions of the great enemy of souls. God's Son, our Saviour, undertook in His love to fulfil the law we had violated, even going to the death for us; and thus He has completed a reconciliation on God's side, and is now by His Spirit pleading with men to be reconciled to God. Not only so, but He promises to give us a new heart, which will hate sin and love holiness; and even beyond this does He go, for He says He will come into our hearts Himself, and will live in them, bringing, of course, His love and patience and power with Him. Anything less than this would be of no use to us. Man not only needs pardon for the past, but power for the present.

When a hurricane broke out some years ago in the Samoan Islands, several warships there were driven, even with full speed up, on to the coral rocks, and were lost. One only escaped, called the *Calliope*, and the reason was that she had lately been home and had new engines put

in. The awful gale which carried the others to their fate did not succeed with her because she had a power within greater than the gale. What we need, and what God offers, is this power. He proposes, so to speak, to provide us with new engines, which will resist every storm of evil successfully. Is it not written of the believer, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world"?

Now, if God's salvation brings us a power greater than the power of all that can come against us, what is there to fear, and why should anyone hesitate to yield up the life and all to Him whose very name, Jesus, signifies that "He shall save His people from their sins"? This is the question God wants settled. He wants us to have done with sin and to live to His glory alone. He offers us immediate pardon and peace through the blood of the Cross. Instead of being the slaves of sin and the world, He offers to make us more than conquerors over both. What is the response? The attitude is at once sad and mad. Multitudes say, "I pray thee have me excused." They move the adjournment of the whole question. Reader, have you never moved this adjournment? Has not the Spirit of God spoken to you in childhood? A still small voice even then called you to the Saviour's side for pardon, peace, and power, but you did not obey. Through sickness and death He called you again, and brought eternity vividly before your mind; but the impressions faded, and you went back again to your old life. To others a summons came through losses in business, and for a time, staggering under your load, you cast a brief glance toward the great Burden-Bearer, but you, too, ultimately declined to yield. You adjourned the question.

The adjournment of this question is *unkind*. We have God repre-

sented in the Bible in a very tender light. He is spoken of as a Father. His language in the first chapter of Isaiah is, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me!" You may not know "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child," but God represents Himself as feeling the rebellion and rejection of Israel as a father would feel over a child who had dashed his hopes to the ground. God loves us, and spurned love is hard to bear.

Quite lately a story was told of a lady whose daughter was stolen from her when she was quite a child. She yearned for that child for a number of years, but no tidings of her reached the mother's ear. At last, one day she saw a young lady who had a strong resemblance to her long-lost daughter. Recognising her fully by a peculiar mark on her neck, she rushed to her arms and kissed her again and again. Her blood was almost frozen in her veins when she found her love returned by a stony and repulsive stare. The young lady did not know her mother, and was only puzzled at her conduct. The tides of love in God's heart are flowing out in strong, deep currents toward us. He comes to us, yearning over us with a love which years of shameful rejection have neither quenched nor diminished, willing to save us and fill our lives with blessing. We repulse His gracious overtures and treat Him with a heartlessness which must amaze angels.

Some of us may have gone on with this conduct till our hairs are grey—perhaps one foot already in the grave. May the Spirit of God open our eyes to see our sin!

To move the adjournment of this question is *unfair*. We have been created to glorify God, and it was not His intention that we should only do it for a part of our lives. With many, a conversation on re-

ligious matters would run very much as follows:—

"Well, John, do you ever think about your soul's salvation?"

"Oh yes; I do sometimes, sir."

"Well, John, don't you know that God wants it settled now?"

"Yes, yes; that's true."

"You know He says, 'Behold *now* is the accepted time.' 'Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God.' Do you think, John, you have done this?"

"I'm afraid not, sir. I'll tell you no lies. I don't think I have."

"Well, John, when do you mean seriously to attend to this?"

And John generally says, "By and by," or, "I'll see about it;" or perhaps he makes an excuse about the inconsistencies of those who profess to be the Lord's; or he loves some sin, and won't give it up. In any of these cases the same result is reached. The man remains away from Christ.

Now it is unfair only to come to Christ when we can't help it. He deserves our whole lives. We would earnestly encourage those in the mid-time of their days, or beyond it, to an immediate surrender, but we most warmly invite those who have life before them, humanly speaking, to give Jesus the best they have and all they have. There is a great difference between a saved soul and a saved life. The thief on the cross had his soul saved, but his life was lost. Saul of Tarsus had both his soul and his life saved for God, and what a blessing he became! Jesus has died to save us, that we "might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him *all* the days of our life" (Luke i. 74, 75). Let Him get all He bought, reader. He delivered Himself up for us; let us deliver ourselves over to Him.

To move the adjournment of this question is *unwise*. Many who have been under impressions for good, and who have unwisely delayed, have often, without avail, longed for

the day to return when the blessed Spirit knocked at the door of the heart for entrance. The Apostle Paul, who knew so much of the deep things of God, hinged everything, from the human standpoint, upon his obedience. He simply says, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Herein lay his safety, his blessing: "I was not disobedient."

Salvation came to Zaccheus because he was wise enough to seize upon the opportunity of the moment—an opportunity which might never have come again.

Brownlow North, who was convicted of sin when playing cards with four or five companions, rose from his chair and went to his bedroom to cry for mercy. A maid was in the room tidying, and Satan suggested, "You cannot go into the room now." He was an aristocrat, the nephew of a Prime Minister; it would never do for him to pray before a servant. Had he delayed, he believed the grieved Spirit would have left him; but, happily, he pushed on, prayed, and received light, and became a widely known and honoured gospel preacher. He obeyed, and was blessed.

There are those who have adjourned this question even when Jesus Himself spoke to them. The young man in the Gospel, *e.g.*, who came as an inquirer, adjourned the whole matter because of what Jesus told him about his possessions. We never read of him coming back.

Herod adjourned the question when John taxed him with his sin, and he preferred to cut off the

preacher's head rather than accept the preacher's advice.

Felix, in trembling tones and with blanched face, moved a speedy adjournment—which, it is to be feared, proved a final one—when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Those men stand out as beacons upon the sunken reef to warn others off. They cry to us, with an exceeding bitter cry, Beware! beware!

Oh, reader, do you mean now, at the close of another year, to lay down this little paper and go off without yielding to Christ? Is nothing going to be a warning? Over the tears of friends, over the prayers of your loved ones, over the gospel messages of years, both read and spoken, do you mean to make your way in order to be lost? God deliver you now!

Lord Lytton, who was H.M. Ambassador at Paris up till the time of his death in 1892, wrote the following lines on a half-sheet of notepaper, which was found after his decease:—

"The *now* is an atom of sand,
The near is a perishing clod;
But afar is as faery land,
And beyond is the bosom of God.
For time as it is cannot stay,
Nor again as it was can it be;
Disappearing and passing away
Are the world and the ages and we!"

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him"
(1Thess. v. 9, 10).

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FOOLISH AND FEARLESS.



"If thou hadst known."

"I WONDER fear did not bring you home," said Nelson's mother to him on returning from some hazardous exploit when he was a boy. "Fear!" cried he; "I never saw fear; what is it?" Our country will never cease to be proud of that man's intrepidity, nor ever wish that he had seen more of fear in any part of his illustrious lifetime.

But there is a fearlessness which it is no credit to possess. Many have no fear because they have no sense. They are too blind, or too stupid, to be afraid. A child playing with firearms has no fear; but who will say it has no need to fear? So is it with a youth who goes on trifling with his temptations.

There is a proud, boastful fearless-

ness more allied to cowardice than to courage; when one chooses to be thoughtless in order that he may be without fear. He is fearless simply because he avoids thinking about God.

There is a stage in human experience, when to think of God at all is to be afraid of Him. Call it slavish fear if you like. In itself it is not a bad thing, and we cannot afford to despise it. There is something of the slave in every one of us. We dread the lash even of the world's opinion, and are often driven by it to do the right and turn from the wrong.

Nor are we above being made better by slavish fear of God. It would be madness on our part to defy the scourge of God; we are too conscious of deserving it. And in our best moments, do we not scourge ourselves? What is this but God's hand dealing severely with us? We are afraid of God. And this wholesome fear of His judgment restrains us, perhaps, a great deal more than we imagine. It keeps our eyes more fixed on what is right and good. It keeps us from plunging over head and ears in wrong-doing. We all have some wisdom from above, because we are whipped into it, or rather, it is whipped into us.

In far back times, a gentle youth stood nobly firm when tempted, and exclaimed, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Joseph was a slave, but it was no slavish fear that urged him to say this, — fear of the consequences. There was between that soul and God the fear there was between Christ and God, the fear true lovers have lest they should do anything to wound each other's feelings.

One kind of fear is at the beginning of wisdom, and another at the end of it. The first belongs more to cowardice, the second is love's fear. The first may be a mean principle, but it is suited to a mean individual.

It gives a lift up to one who is meaner than itself. Let us be content to say, if we can go no further: "*We dare not. God will punish us. Society will shut its door against us. We must not do it, lest we be despised.*" There are a thousand temptations to evil which this fear will help us to overcome.

Is not one often kept from drunkenness through fear of the consequences? He would lose health, or he would lose credit. He dare not indulge. In the same way many are kept from the more subtle and spiritual snares of the devil. The fear of God's anger, or wrath, acts as cleansing fire upon them; and by means of this they cannot become as vile as they feel half inclined to be.

In the poetical language of one of the Psalms (xix.) "*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever.*" The fear God inspires tends to cleanness, not for the moment only, but for ever. It works that way. It may not raise a man to the crown all at once; but, at any rate, it lifts him from the clay, or keeps him from going there. Better grow clean, or Christlike, *slavishly, tremblingly*, than not grow in that direction at all.

The meaner fear leads to wisdom, and wisdom leads to the noblest fear of all. Wisdom is far-sighted. It looks as high up as God, as far away as eternity. When a man—ignoring all else—makes a rush for temporal success, and gains it, the world says he has done well. So he has, if you take a low view of human life and destiny; if you regard human life as a mere hunt for prey. He has gained his object; but only after the manner of a successful fox or leopard. Nor is it likely he can now, though he would, begin to set his heart on nobler things. They say he has been "*bettering himself*" all along; but that is not so; he has only been bettering his circumstances. All along, slowly, silently, stealthily,

steadily, the better nature has been running out of him, as the sand runs in the hour-glass.

It shows by contrast what true wisdom is. Let success be the greatest possible within that narrow range, you may call it the fruit of prudence, or cunning, or smartness; but it is not the fruit of wisdom. How can one be wise at all who is not wise for God and eternity? How foolish one must be who is in this way fearless.

The true fear which wisdom leads to is begotten in Christ. It is the fruit of prayer. It is the fruit of taking things seriously; the fruit of penitence and new obedience; of faith and patient waiting. One who knows it bears this witness: "I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come! and I came. I had often heard that call, and I began to be afraid to stay away any longer, so I came. I had nothing but my need to bring. I was poor, needy, helpless, guilty, desolate. Of two things I felt quite sure,—I needed a Saviour, and Christ was just the Saviour that I needed. In dread lest I must lose Him after all, I came, to find more than I expected. He was much more brotherly than I had thought, so much more ready to forgive, so much greater in love, and tenderness, and sympathy. For the fear that brought me, He gave me another fear quite different. It bound me to Him with cords of love. Not the fear of being lost, but the fear lest I should not love and serve Him well enough."

This is true witness. Christ is the Eternal Wisdom. In league with Him we get a changed view of the world and its affairs. We can then see the difference between one who is wise and one who is only sharp. In Christ we seem to look down on earthly things from the elevation of a star. We seem to see from the beginning to the end;

from the highest to the lowest; and nothing is great but what is intrinsically and eternally so. The grandeur of the world is like a withered leaf, the glory of man like the trodden grass.

The new view comes with the new fear which wisdom leads to. Not the fear that hath torment, nor the fear of an unwilling servant, nor the fear of a slave, nor dread of the lash, nor fear of punishment; but the fear love brings.

This holy reverence makes the earth to us one grand temple, filled with the glory of God, radiant with His beauty, the abode of His love, the stronghold of His unstained righteousness. And there is music in this temple unceasingly. All His works praise Him. There is an accordant *Hallelujah* rising from everything except the impenitent heart, more dead than the stones we tread on.

This fear teaches us that the earth is peopled with angelic visitants. Go where we may, it is a holy place, for the feet of God have been there before us. Life grows more and more thankful that it lives, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. There is in life now a glad solemnity, an awe-inspiring mystery it never had before. It is impossible any more to take pleasure in wickedness; its entanglements are now no stronger over us than a spider's thread. We feel the breathing of the Almighty in us. Girded with God's strength, we go forward to God's victory, step by step.

This comes more readily to the man of years than to the youth or the young maiden. These usually are not troubled with fear when there is a great deal to be afraid of. The temptations and trials of life can be derided by those who do not know them. The lad, in going to be a sailor, has no fear of a sailor's

hardships. He thinks he has conquered them before he has met them. No storm will make him afraid; nor has he any fear of being unhappy away from his comfortable home.

In many young men and young women there is an ignorance and wilfulness well-nigh invincible; they are so foolishly fearless. But if the fear of God finds a place in them, nowhere does it sit more charmingly. It is very beautiful, and the joy it gives to parents is perhaps the deepest joy ever felt in this world. They know that if it comes then, it comes for ever.

Young men, young women reading this, you cannot be thankful enough if you have the fear of God in you, be it of any kind whatever, and in the smallest measure. Do not quench it, even the shadow of it is worth your weight in gold. Take heed, it is either growing in you or declining. Strong currents of temptation beset you on every hand. They move you sometimes when you are least suspecting it.

Not long since, the *Drummond Castle* was wrecked off the French coast. It was an awful disaster. Out of hundreds of lives, only three were saved. No one knows how it came to pass. But experienced seamen tell us how subtle as well as strong the currents of the sea are in that region, so that a captain might be secretly driven twenty or thirty miles out of his course without the possibility of knowing it. How needful, in such a case, to be well guarded on the safe side!

Such drifting, without knowing it, towards shipwreck of the soul, is too common in human life, in the life of the young especially. Think not you can ever in any way be tempted without fear of yielding.

Give good heed to a father's counsel as long as you have him. The entreaty of a mother is more to be trusted still. There is in it a peculiar sacredness. God has ordained it so from the beginning, that a mother is to be like a prophetess to her children. Above all, let the Saviour be your guide and guardian; seek shelter under His awful cross. Even He Himself, we are told, was heard for His godly fear. What dread may then be ours, lest we stand nearer than we think to him "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace"!

Jesus wept over the foolish and fearless city. Often warned, it refused to know both its danger and its opportunity of being saved. "If thou hadst known"—alas! it was too late. "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Poor sinner, flee to the Saviour's arms! *Now* is the accepted time; *now*, the day of salvation. Seek Him while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

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SECRETARY—R. HENDERSON SMITH, 40 HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MONTHLY VISITOR.

MAY 1897.

ROBERT WHITAKER M'ALL,*

FOUNDER OF THE M'ALL MISSION, PARIS.



It could have been no ordinary man who, at the age of fifty, was induced, solely through a sense of duty, to abandon a comfortable and congenial field of labour in England, and begin an Evangelical Mission, in an unfamiliar language, in the restless city of Paris, just after the Prussian invasion and the Communist convulsion; and, after twenty years, left the work in a very prosperous condition at a hundred and thirty-six stations, mostly in Paris, but many in other parts of the country.

* For a full account of Dr. M'All's life, see the interesting Memoir by his widow, lately published by the Religious Tract Society.

Shortly before his death, Dr. M'All began an autobiography, but unfortunately he wrote but a single page. That page, however, contains a statement of singular interest; it explains the reason why he thought of writing his biography. That reason was, that he believed that no one had ever led a happier life, and that the secret of this happiness lay in his having consecrated himself wholly to the work which his Master had given him to do.

This was especially true of the twenty years of his Paris life, although to an outsider it must have appeared an endless round of toil, anxiety, and worry; although it brought him no material remuneration (for he lived on his private resources); and although its chief variety lay in severe headaches that prostrated him from time to time. How in such circumstances he contrived to live what he describes as a life of unparalleled happiness must surely be an interesting question, especially in these times when some are gravely asking, Is life worth living? Dr. M'All was a man of remarkably simple, transparent, guileless nature, and no one needs to fear that his claim to a singularly happy life was due either to reckless exaggeration or to hypocritical pretence.

His family connection was Scottish; his ancestors came originally from the island of Coll, although for some unknown reason the spelling of the name had been changed from MacColl to M'All. During all his life Scotland had a special attraction for him; he paid no fewer than fifteen visits to it, chiefly by way of relaxation, during his English life; and as a delightful holiday resort he found it. His father was an eminent and eloquent preacher of the English Congregational Church; and his mother, a woman of firm character and earnest godliness. He was born

in January 1821, and seventy years afterwards he could say of his youth, "No human being was ever so highly privileged. My whole early life was marked by all that could tend to incline the heart Godward and Christward." So early as his seventeenth year, in the prospect of the communion, he was able to consecrate himself heart and soul to the service of the Lord.

"I, an unworthy creature, deeply sensible of my lost and ruined state by nature, of the unsatisfactory nature of all earthly things, and of the impossibility of being any otherwise saved than by the death of Jesus, do now declare it to be my solemn purpose (which God enable me to fulfil!) to declare an absolute, interminable, and unflinching war against every sin, and to devote myself as far as possible to the service and love of my Saviour. I yield myself now to Him alone—His merits alone can give me acceptance before God; I know His perfect righteousness and finished salvation, and hope it is applied to me. In a word, I own it my purpose, though nothing in myself, to devote myself to the glory of God and the Saviour, and I can conceive no greater happiness—it is inconceivable—than to . . . cast my crown at the feet of Jesus, and unite in the singing of praises to God and the Lamb for ever."

His father died early, charging him to be a minister of Christ, but for some reason he accepted a situation in an architect's office, and for a time prepared energetically, and with much promise of success, for that profession. His only sister died about the same time, and he had no brother. After some years, he entered on an engagement with Sir Charles Barry, the eminent architect, when one day in church the conviction came home to him that, after all, he ought to devote himself to the ministry. What precisely it was that produced this impression he could hardly say; for the sermon and the text had alike escaped his memory. It is likely that his father's dying charge came back to his recollection, and that the state of mind in which he then was was

favourable to the idea of the ministerial calling. Though he determined to take counsel with his friends before committing himself to the change, he seems personally to have had a strong sense of duty from the first, and very soon we find him enrolled as a student in the Lancashire Independent College, Whalley Range.

During the twenty-three years of his English ministry, he occupied five spheres of labour—Sunderland, Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham, and Hadleigh, Suffolk. From the first he had had a strong desire for the mission field, but his duty to his aged widowed mother, who had no other near relative, hindered him. Some years later, when the door of Madagascar was opened, the desire returned, but his wife had a similar duty to *her* mother. Later in the day, when the man of Macedonia again called from the heights of Belleville in Paris, there was no such obstacle, and the call was obeyed.

His first charge was at Sunderland, where he remained seven years, and the character of his ministry there may be inferred from a letter addressed by an old friend to his widow after his death.

“The memory of the past rushes upon me as I write these lines: all that he was to us young men; how he led us gently to consecrate our lives to the service of the same loving Master that he served, and how freely we responded to his appeals. Many would be waiting to receive him at the pearly gates, and many more will follow who can look back and date their conversion and consecration to his work in Sunderland.”

Of his other ministerial charges in England we have no room to write, nor of the help given him by his like-minded wife, an accomplished Christian lady, with a great musical gift, which afterwards helped so much to vivify the Paris meetings. Thoroughly devoted to his ministry, he yet retained some of his early

tastes, notably his delight in botany. He tells a story of a Scottish friend who accompanied him on one of his rambles. Seeing this friend suspended above him on a rock like a spider, in pursuit of the Alpine bartsia, he warned him not to risk his life for one small plant. The enthusiastic botanist replied, “Eh, mon, there are twa!”

When Dr. and Mrs. M’All left Hadleigh in the autumn of 1871 for a customary holiday on the Continent, they little thought of the change of sphere and style of labour on which they were soon to enter. As usual, he had provided himself with an ample supply of tracts for distribution, but, on reaching London Bridge *en route* for France, he found that they had been left behind. A less energetic and devoted man would simply have scolded himself for his stupidity, and gone on his way. Not so Dr. M’All. As fast as a cab could carry him, he rushed back for the tracts. Had he gone without them, the whole complexion of his after life would probably have been changed. At that time, the people of Paris, just emerging from their disasters, and full of the saddest memories, seemed specially open to any manifestation of kindly feeling. Even the giving of a tract with a kindly smile touched them. Mr. and Mrs. M’All would not leave till they had taken their tracts to Belleville, the very heart of the Communist district. It was their last evening in Paris. The tracts were given on the way, and in the little shops, and were most kindly received. “One intelligent man,” says Mr. M’All, “who could speak a little English, stood forward and asked if I were not a Christian minister. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘I have something to tell you. Throughout this whole district, containing tens of thousands of workmen, we cannot accept an *imposed* religion. But if

anyone would come to teach us religion of another kind, a religion of freedom and reality, many of us are ready for it.' We heard them saying, as we moved away, 'Bons Anglais, bons Anglais!'"

Mr. M'All was deeply moved, for it seemed as if God were opening a new door to him, and calling him to consecrate himself to a new work. Consulting with friends, both English and French, he found this view confirmed. The result was that in October he resigned his charge at Hadleigh; on 17th November he reached Paris, and began to study the language. By the end of November he had procured a place of meeting, which was opened on the 17th January. On 24th January the first Sunday meeting was held, crowded to the door, and Mr. M'All was able to give a short address in French. It had been explained that the object of the meeting was to speak to the people of the love of God, and help them to live good lives. From the very first at all the M'All meetings the endeavour has been to place in the very forefront the good news of the gospel, and under its glorious revelation encourage the children of toil to take a bright and happy view of life.

We have no room to give any details of the marvellous success of the M'All Mission. Let one fact suffice. After twenty years, Mr., then Dr., M'All received an address with 5300 signatures from adherents of the various stations, expressing their warmest thanks for the inestim-

able blessings they had received through the Mission.

Nor did he lack public honours. In 1877 he received a medal from "La Société d'Encouragement au Bien;" and in 1878 another from "La Société Libre d'Instruction et d'Education Populaires." A crowning honour was the reception in 1892 from the President of the Republic of the cross of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

Dr. M'All was one of those men who conquer through what Milton has called "the invincible might of meekness." Pre-eminent for humility, kindliness, tact, and courtesy, he made his way with singular quietness, yet singular success, and the only rock ahead he was ever in much danger of was the woe of those of whom all men speak well.

A serious illness in England in 1893 might have warned him that his strength was not equal to former exertions. But as soon as he was able he returned to Paris, and was soon immersed in unnumbered labours. But the silver cord could not stand the strain; on May 11, 1893, he fell asleep, amid the profound respect and unqualified regrets of all good men, verifying most emphatically the beautiful words, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Who among our readers will not be moved by his example to conquer all selfish interests, and consecrate his life to the service of God?

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THE PLACE AND POWER OF FAITH.



See page 4

WHEN Dr. Inglis was translating the Bible into the language of Aneityum, he was brought to a standstill by the word *faith* or *believe*. He discovered that there was not such a word in the island. No man there had ever trusted another; and, of course, they had no word for an experience to which they were utter

strangers. When anxiously hunting for this missing word, Dr. Inglis saw a mother with a little baby on her breast. By a happy inspiration which looks like genius, he said to himself, "I have found it now. I will get the word for the leaning of that child upon the mother's breast, and it will stand for believing."

Probably Dr. Inglis did not then know that he had been guided to the very word for, and the very illustration of, faith, which meet us again and again in the Old Testament. The root of the Hebrew word for faith, and for leaning on, and being supported by, a mother's bosom, is the very same. When Abraham believed God, he just lay back upon God's covenant mercy, even as a child nestles gladly and safely in the mother's strong and warm bosom.

One wonders how any reader of the New Testament can miss the truth which is written across the Bible, as with a sunbeam, that we are saved only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith has five distinct meanings. It means the endorsing of a testimony (John iii. 33), and belief in a report (Isa. liii. 1), in a record (1 John v. 10), or a saying (1 Tim. i. 15). In every case there must be that to begin with, though it is a great mistake to suppose that faith is simply intellectual belief. Faith is also the receiving of a gift. God holds out His full hand, and the sinner comes as an empty-handed beggar. When these two hands meet, the gift passes from the one hand into the other, and becomes the possession of the believing soul.

Faith is also an intelligent, whole-hearted surrender to the Saviour. It is a yielding (Rom. vi. 13); it is a giving of one's self away (2 Cor. viii. 5); it is a solemn committing of the soul to another's keeping (1 Pet. iv. 19). It is not belief in the words of a dead Lord; but a living trust in a living Saviour, a whole faith in the whole Saviour who died for our sins, and rose again on the third day. Of course, faith saves only as it is the hand that grasps Christ. Faith has not been crucified for us, nor have we been baptized into the name of faith.

Faith is, fourthly, the beginning of a new life. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17); it creates a new life in him; and, when not defeated in any way, it makes him a man of the noblest sort, an earnest imitator in all things of the alone perfect Man earth has yet seen. Further, the word faith sometimes means that *fidelity* which is the outcome of personal decision for Christ: the name of the root is given also to the fruit (Heb. xi.). This is made plain in the frequent Bible phrase, "the faithful." The man of God and of Christ relies and can be relied upon; standing right with God, he strives to stand right with his own conscience, and with all men. Both in the Old and New Testaments, faith hovers between these two meanings which blend in the word faithful. This teaches us a useful lesson. He is not a man of faith who does not cherish leal-heartedness and spiritual honour. This side of faith was very dear to the hearts of the early Christians. It should be as dear to us. The Christian should be faithful, that is, full of faith Christward and manward.

We may distinguish these five features of "the common faith," but they are all united in experience. The soul, feeling its sin and need, and despairing of help from any other quarter, goes forth with the consent of all its powers, and embraces and rests upon Christ alone for salvation.

Saving faith is thus the whole man in action. It unites the assent of the understanding, the consent of the heart, and the answering devotion of the whole life. Some wonder why faith is the one condition of salvation. Slender and disproportionate as it seems; when we take the biblical view of it, the germs of all graces, virtues, and fruitful activities are found to reside

in that faith which is the gift of God, and which teaches a man to rely, not upon what he has done for himself, but upon what Another has done for him.

The first act of this faith is the grand difficulty with many. How often the seeker of Christ tortures himself needlessly! How simple faith seems to have been in the early Church! Christ was offered to them, and they just accepted the offer. Christ said, "Come," and they came at once. The gift was held out, and they stretched forth to it the hands of the heart. An open door was before them, and they entered, and their whole life was changed.

But many fear that they are not coming in the right way. Well, come; come in any way; come as near Christ as ever you can. "Come unto me," He says, ". . . and I will give you rest." The word "come" there is not a verb, but an exclamation. It means "This way!" "Ho, hither to me!" It calls off your thoughts from your coming and fastens them all upon Christ; it puts the soul into the attitude of "looking unto Jesus."

A mistress told me lately, with tears, that her servant and lifelong friend had just died. When in mortal pain the bell was rung one day. Her instinct of prompt service was strong in death. She rose, struggled upstairs, and fell in the lobby, with her face towards her mistress. She did not come to her mistress, but her mistress rushed to her. That coming, though a failure, affected her mistress more than all her successful comings had done.

Will you fare worse in your coming to Christ? Turn your face Christwards, and though you stumble and fall, He will not reject your trembling appeal. The essential thing is to move Christwards; the worst thing in the world is to stand

still till habitual hesitation has paralysed the will. Spiritual fear is like a horrid nightmare: the moment you move, the evil spell is broken. Souls are usually launched upon the Christian life as our ships are launched. Get them forward ever so little, and they soon plunge into their element. When once dislodged, they cannot stay where they are. I have read that when a ship is being launched, it is sometimes held back in a mysterious way: a stone or block of wood has got under the keel. A single blow from a mechanic's hammer displaces the arresting block, and the vessel glides smoothly into the water. Many in our churches are, like the vessel on the stays, well inclined, but not launched. They are held back by something, we cannot tell what. They have strong Christian convictions and sympathies, but they are not frankly on the side of Christ.

Not a few of this class are brought over the dividing line by the shock of a surprise. The Holy Spirit often uses a new phrasing of an old truth, or an unexpected application of a familiar text. I give one or two illustrative cases. "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Will He cast you out? "No." "Then, will you cast Him out?" "No; I won't do that." "Then, you receive Him?" "I daresay I do." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" And how shall we *not* escape, if we accept it?" One hearer confessed that that short, sharp question revealed the gospel to him. "'If any man willeth—is willing—to do His will.' Are you willing to do it?" "No; I'm not." "Isn't that a great shame?" "Yes; it is." "You'll have done with it, then?" "By God's grace, I will." "I mean to become a Christian when I'm forty-five." "But isn't it very mean and shabby deliberately to give the harvest of your life to the devil,

and only its stubble to God?" That question was the beginning of a very useful Christian career.

Sometimes a homely illustration succeeds, where all else had failed. "I often felt that I was all wrong," an intelligent Christian worker said to me, "and I began to reform in my own strength; but my efforts came to nothing. At last I took into my confidence a preacher who had interested me. The light came to me through a simple illustration he used. It was this. A minister was one day visiting one of his people. He had to cross a burn by a plank. He hesitated, timidly put his foot on the plank, and asked the bystanding woman if the plank would bear him. 'Oh yes,' she said; 'you may lippen (that is, *trust*) a' your wecht to it.' 'That,' he replied, 'is like the gospel I preach. I wish you to *lippen* to Christ all the weight of your soul and your sins.'" After many years my friend gratefully recalls that illustration as the means of his conversion.

I once visited a well-educated young man, who was dying in distressing spiritual darkness. He was battling for breath, and I felt that my words must be very few.

"Do you believe that I would save you, on the spot, if I could?"

"Yes; I do," he replied.

"Do you believe that Christ is less willing to save you than I am?"

His eyes wandered all round the room, and then fastened their startled gaze upon me, as he said, very slowly, "Well—no."

"You said yes at once to my first

question, and only after a long pause you said no to my second. You really believe that I am willing to save you, but that Christ is not? I am willing, but I am not able. Christ is infinitely more willing than I am; and He is able to save unto the uttermost."

After two or three minutes of unbroken silence, he said, "I see now that I have been distrusting Christ, and that my doubts are very unreasonable."

"Keep to that," I said. "Your suspicions of Christ are most unreasonable after all He has done and said." After prayer, I left him with the text: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." I repeated it two or three times, with all the emphasis I could command. His doubts melted away in the sunshine of the gospel. He lingered for some time, but he suffered and died in peace. His deathbed testimony was, "I am persuaded that He will in no wise cast me out."

The difficulties of many arise from their overlooking the distinction between saving faith and that full realisation of the unseen which yields spiritual ecstasy. Full realising power belongs only to the favoured few; for it requires, besides faith, rare gifts of intellect, sympathy, and imagination.

Ecstasy or no ecstasy, he has saving faith who abandons all self-righteousness, and heartily accepts Jesus Christ as his Redeemer and Master. Without this faith all our religion is a weariness and a delusion. Reader, is this faith yours?

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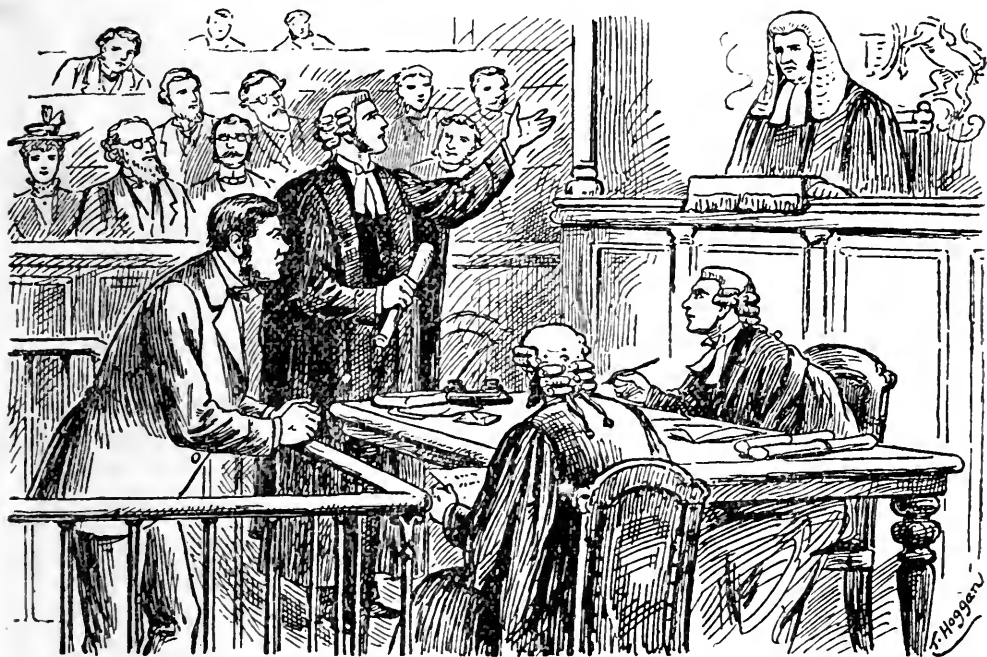
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OUR ADVOCATE.



IN the court of justice the advocate is the sinner's friend. He puts himself in his client's place, and takes up the cause of the accused as if it were his own.

After this pattern, Jesus is the sinner's Advocate, the sinner's Friend. We cannot ourselves answer for sin. We can confess it. That is all. But

that is not enough. After confession, the sin is still there. Indeed, it is more there than ever.

How apt the sinner is to suppose that his confession is meritorious,—that, having confessed, by that simple process he and his sin are separate. It seems to him a cheap way of deliverance. And so it would be,

if it were true. It is a great error. Let us see how it works.

One will say, If I own my sin, what more is needed? The sin is done with thereafter and for ever. No advocate is needed. A Saviour is superfluous. My confession saves me.

But human nature in its deepest instincts is entirely against this fine theory. A man who can speak so makes it clear that he is confessing nothing, that he has nothing to confess. No sense of sin stirs his soul. Or if it did, he would be the last to think there was merit enough in his confession to buy forgiveness. Not so stood the publican in the temple, when he confessed his sin, and cried, "God be merciful!" His sense of need for a Saviour, in all likelihood, was deepest then.

The Scriptures teach us, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John i. 9),—linking confession with forgiveness, but not more closely than they connect both of these with our Advocate, and the atoning value of our Advocate's sufferings.

Confession, no doubt, does good; but the good it does is in the opposite direction to that in which it is often supposed to lie. It makes sin more like itself than before. It deepens our sense of it as a dread reality. Instead of making an advocate superfluous, only when confession begins does it dawn on us that an advocate is indispensable.

Jesus is the sinner's Advocate, the sinner's Friend. It is He who answers for us. And there is a wonderful difference when He takes up our case and pleads our cause; when He makes our cause His own.

To illustrate this, notice one or two points of difference between Jesus and a common advocate. A common advocate does not actually take his client's place. The identity is only a nominal, or mental one.

The two men may stand side by side, and yet be at heart wide as possible asunder. The one answers for the other, but from the *outside*. There is no real *oneness* between them.

But Jesus Christ is at one with us. How it is we cannot tell. But He is the Head, and Heart, and Hope of the fallen human race. Not in any formal sense does He stand instead of us. He does so in spirit and in truth. His identity with us is a real identity. So that when He pleads our cause it is from the *inside*. He actually makes our cause His own. "*We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" He suffers for sin because He is in oneness with the sinner; and there is divine efficacy in His sufferings. We can confess sin. It is the blood—the life-sacrifice—of Jesus Christ that cleanseth it.

Again, a common advocate is satisfied if his client is simply *pronounced* righteous. It is not his concern whether the transgressor is *made* righteous or not. He strives to make the man *look* innocent. That is his business. His object is not absolute truth and righteousness, but acquittal. And oftentimes he will be conscious of exerting himself to get a clear verdict for a guilty man.

It is not so with Jesus Christ, our Advocate; "Jesus Christ, the righteous,"—so called because He aims at truth and righteousness: not that the guilty man should be *pronounced* righteous, but *made* righteous. This blood-bought redemption of Jesus is no *formal* redemption. We share it just in so far as we become partakers of His holiness. There is reality in the union from both sides. Christ's union with us does not imply our union with Him; but when, by faith, we do unite ourselves with Him, the oneness is not a matter of name and appearance, but of root and fruit,

like that between the branch and the tree into which it is grafted.

Our Advocate does not conceal our guilt. He unfolds it to the fullest. The Justifier of the ungodly must Himself be just. He does not seek that the penalty be remitted. It is not remitted. It is borne by Him in us, or by us in Him, whichever way you like to put it. The curse is not commanded to depart. That meek Sufferer simply and submissively *bears it*, and calls on us to take up our cross and follow Him.

We thus get to see what it means when Jesus Christ is called our Advocate, the sinner's Friend, and when the epithet *righteous* is attached to His name. What depth of meaning and efficacy our poor confessions have, when His lips—the lips of His very soul—convey them! What truth and power in our penitence when He expresses it! What reality in our forgiveness when He pronounces it! We can take acquittal at hands like His. The deliverance is a *real* deliverance; nor is it a cheap deliverance; it is dearly bought.

Again, a common advocate pleads before a judge or magistrate. Jesus pleads before the Father. "*We have an advocate with the Father.*" Why is this? it may be asked. Cannot we come straight home, as the prodigal seems to have done in the parable? "*I will arise and go to my Father.*" The wanderer simply comes home. No cross was borne; no advocate needed. So it is often said.

But when you look into the matter you can see that both cross and advocate are there, most decidedly. It is an *inward* cross. The guiltless sire was bearing it in his soul. He, and not the other, had the full weight of the guilt, and the shame, and the misery. You see how terrible it was to him by the extravagance of his joy when he could say, It is finished: "*this my*

son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found"!

And just as surely as the healing cross is there, so also is the advocate. What happened while yet the son was a great way off? Did not some one run to meet him? We are to understand that had he not been met, he would not have come at all. He could not. Shame and fear would have prevented him. He would have stood "*a great way off*," feeling it more difficult to come the nearer he approached; less inclined the more he felt his need for coming. He had his confession all ready, but, as the time drew near, his unclean lips grew less able to utter it. As he stood far off, unable to move another step, the father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him! You see there both the cross-bearer and the advocate. "*God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*" In the father's embrace, there was an *advocate's* embrace as well. The penitent heart needed to be brought, because it was *so* penitent.

Caroline Fox speaks of a Scotch sailor whom she found dying in Falmouth Hospital. He had frightened the clergyman away, and other good people, by his stormy language. But somehow she gained his confidence, and he poured out to her the story of his life. "Oh, I was a bad, bad, bad boy! My life has been one course of sin!" He could confess; but he was utterly without hope of forgiveness. His eyes had the fixedness of despair. He could not endure that the good lady should write to his friends at home; but at last she wheedled his father's address out of him. She wrote, and had a loving letter from his brother, hailing him as alive from the dead; another from his sister, in ecstasy of joy, telling of his father's complete forgiveness, and saying, "He would have spent his last shilling to come to you, but he is gone!"

When he received this, floods of ecstatic wonder came from the poor sailor. He poured forth his thankfulness and his tears before God. He covered his sister's letter with kisses, saying, "It's my sister's heart, her heart." The human love led him to the divine, still more sweet and precious; the human pleader, who had done so much for him, raised his faith to that better Advocate who could do still more for him, in the same kind of loving and merciful way, but with infinite and eternal efficacy.

Oh, reader! oh, bruised heart, in fear and hopelessness on account of sin! Think of what your Heavenly Father has spent to come to you. He has spared nothing that He might win you back to Himself. Think of the gentle Friend who pleads in your behalf, and never pleads in vain!

God is like an earthly father in His love, but He is not like an earthly father in His righteousness,—as being the unchanging and eternal Righteousness. So that, whilst we prodigal children might return to an earthly father, and be content that he should receive us, and simply say nothing about our misdeeds,—to return so to God is for us impossible, by the nature which God Himself has given us. And this, not because God is so much worse than an earthly parent, but because He is so much better. So infinitely good is He as a righteous Father, that if we are at all penitent we dare not go without our Advocate. If it were in no sense true that He

needed to be propitiated on account of sin, we should, even as sinners ourselves, reckon Him a God to be despised and distrusted.

But in the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we have a sublime union of love and righteousness, of mercy and truth. We adore the mystery; we cannot understand it. The blood of Jesus cleanseth us. His cross is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. He is our only hope and confidence in living and in dying. He is human nature's bread and wine. He is everybody's Advocate, who chooses to make Him so: "*The propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only; but also for the whole world.*"

When the heart is sorrowful, and the mind clouded, and the conscience cannot rest,—when the present is joyless, and the future full of gloomy threatenings,—when nature fails, and every creature support is giving way, and that untried world of the unseen, with its dread white throne of judgment, is the only real world left to us,—oh, how precious then to have this Advocate, this bright Image of the Father, to guide us into the Father's presence, to speak for us when we ourselves are dumb,—to plead for us all-availingly, as He alone can, to make our cause His own, and present us faultless before the presence of the Father's glory, with exceeding joy! "*We are accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*"

Those who feel disposed to aid the Society in continuing and extending the gratuitous circulation of these Tracts, are requested to give their Subscriptions or Donations, however small, to the Distributors of the Tracts.

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